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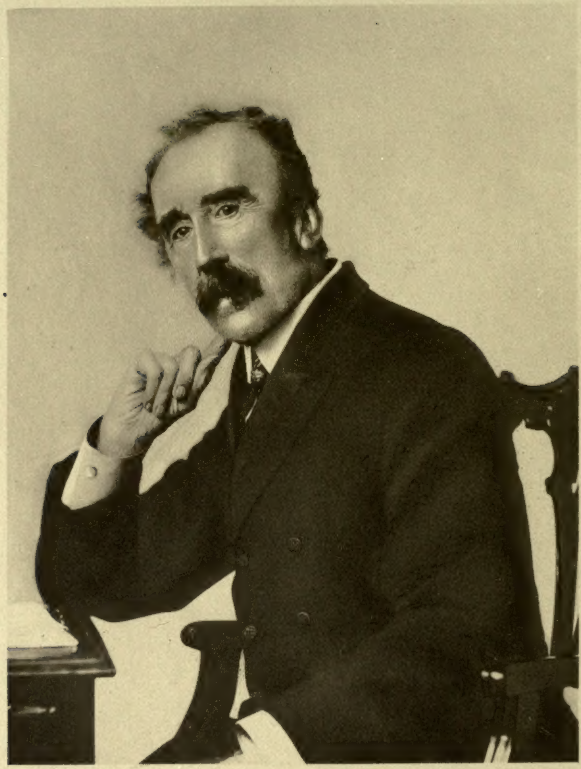
MEMORIES OF CHARLES DICKENS

[In the chapter "A Glimpse of Forster, Carlyle and Browning" use has been made by the Author of an article by him appearing in a recent number of the *Contemporary Review.*]



Yours
Percy FitzPatrick

MEMORIES
OF
CHARLES DICKENS

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF
"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"
AND
"ALL THE YEAR ROUND"
AND OF THE
CONTRIBUTORS
THERETO

BY

PERCY FITZGERALD, F.S.A.

BRISTOL
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WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR
RELATING TO
CHARLES DICKENS.

- TWO ENGLISH ESSAYISTS: CHARLES LAMB AND CHARLES DICKENS. 1863.
- RECREATIONS OF A LITERARY MAN. 1882.
- HISTORY OF PICKWICK. 1891.
- MEMOIRS OF AN AUTHOR. Two Vols. 1894.
- BOZLAND. 1895.
- PICKWICKIAN MANNERS AND CUSTOMS. 1897.
- PAVILIONSTONE. 1902.
- BARDELL *v.* PICKWICK. 1902.
- JOHN FORSTER. By ONE OF HIS FRIENDS. 1903.
- PICKWICKIAN WIT AND HUMOUR. 1903.
- MEMOIRS OF JOSEPH GRIMALDI: By CHARLES DICKENS. Edited, with Notes. 1903.
- THE PICKWICKIAN DICTIONARY. 1903.
- THE LIFE OF CHARLES DICKENS, REVEALED IN HIS WORKS. Two Vols. 1905.

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Foreword

It may seem a bold thing to say, and a self-delusion, but I doubt if among all the existing records of Dickens's domestic life—and they are many—there will be found any that give such a picture of his character and manners in private life as is to be found in the sketches that follow. They are "intimate" as well as observant. Forster wrote officially, and in his stately way "put behind him" all mere domestic details as highly trivial. Others, such as my friend Marcus Stone, have not been "trained to the pen," to the difficulties of noting traits of character, though orally no one could exceed him in his warm, genuine portraitures of his friend. Mine, I say unaffectedly, is the truest picture existing of the man, because I have long been well schooled to observe shades of character, emotions and feelings, as well as to record. Again, then, I could almost venture to say, in a certain sense and to a certain degree, I was more privileged than others with a deal of his engaging confidence, a thing delightful now to think of. He was always pleased to unfold himself to me with a gay freedom and humour, chiefly, I really believe, because I somehow contrived to touch old sympathies of his to which he found others not responsive, because they did not understand him, but which to him were the most sacred things.

The note of "childhood" and its recollections, so precious to him, can be traced in all directions, and the sympathy shown by another for this tender penchant of his was, I firmly believe, the cause of his indulgence to myself. I propose, in illustration of his most interesting character, to give a special series of domestic pictures and sketches of him in his *vie intime*, which I think has not been done hitherto to any extent. It will be seen presently that I was a privileged person in many ways, and that to me he showed many *facets* of his delightful nature, and of which there is no record to be found elsewhere. I see no reason why I should not strive to increase the general love and admiration by setting these sketches before the public.

In the pages that follow will be found a very abundant collection of his letters—near fifty or so—addressed to myself, and showing all the sides of his character, overflowing with humorous allusions, sly jests, gentle reproofs, happy satire, and, above all, constant assurances of a regard—a regard that was proved by a never-relaxing indulgence.*

PERCY FITZGERALD.

October, 1913.

---

* It is difficult to speculate what was in Dickens's mind when he adopted the practice of using a numeral *word* instead of a figure to mark the date of his letter. He adhered to it without fail to the day, literally, of his death, with this additional peculiarity, that he used blue paper and blue ink, and blue lettering to his paper. I suppose the *verbal* form of the numeral appealed to his eye as being the most emphatic form. Even " Esq." was always in full as " Esquire."

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Chronology of Dickens's Principal Literary Work

1833.	First published piece of writing, *A Dinner at Poplar Walk,* in the *Monthly Magazine.* Followed by nine others in same journal.
1834.	First article under the signature of "Boz" (in *Monthly Magazine*).
1835.	Contributions to the *Evening Chronicle* under George Hogarth.
1836.	*Sketches by Boz* (published by Macrone). *Sunday under Three Heads.* *Village Coquettes* (opera published).
1836–37.	*The Pickwick Papers* (in monthly parts).
1837.	*The Strange Gentleman* (Comic Opera). *Is she his Wife? or Something Singular* (Comic Burletta).
1837–39.	*Oliver Twist* (in *Bentley's Miscellany,* which he edited during that period).
1838.	*Sketches of Young Gentlemen.* *Memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi.*
1838–39.	*Nicholas Nickleby* (in monthly parts—Chapman and Hall).
1840.	*Sketches of Young Couples.*
1840–41.	*Master Humphrey's Clock,* including the *Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge.*
1841.	*The Pic-Nic Papers* (Edited).
1842.	*American Notes.*
1843.	*A Christmas Carol.*

1843–44.	*Martin Chuzzlewit* (in monthly parts).
1844.	*Evenings of a Working Man.* *The Chimes.*
1845.	*The Cricket on the Hearth.*
1846.	*Pictures from Italy* (originally appeared in *Daily News*, of which he was the first editor, from January 21st to February 9th). *The Battle of Life.*
1846–48.	*Dombey and Son* (in monthly parts).
1848.	*The Haunted Man.*
1849.	Began publication of *Household Words* (March 30th).
1849–50.	*David Copperfield* (in monthly parts).
1852–53.	*Bleak House* (in monthly parts).
1852–53.	*A Child's History of England* (in *Household Words*).
1854.	*Hard Times* (in *Household Words*).
1855–57.	*Little Dorrit* (in monthly parts).
1859.	Abandoned *Household Words* and began the publication of *All the Year Round.* *A Tale of Two Cities* (in *All the Year Round*).
1860–61.	*Great Expectations* (in *All the Year Round*).
1864–65.	*Our Mutual Friend* (in monthly parts).
1869.	*Religious Opinions of the late Rev. Chauncey Hare Townshend.*
1870.	*The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (in monthly parts).
1857.	*The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices* (with Wilkie Collins, published in *Household Words*).
1860.	*Hunted Down* (in *All the Year Round*). *The Uncommercial Traveller* (1st Series in *All the Year Round.* Other papers under the same name were also contributed by him at later dates).

I

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

Memories of Charles Dickens

CHAPTER I

FIRST INTRODUCTION TO "BOZ." HIS DOGS. FESTIVITIES AT GAD'S HILL.

It seems a curious or, perhaps, an unusual thing in the record of survivorship, that at this moment there should be living but one only of Dickens's many literary friends — the last of a large group. Mr. Marcus Stone, R.A., who was a very dear friend of his, and the son of a dear friend, still lives; but there is no one who was intimately bound up with his literary work, and at the same time an intimate friend, save one, and that person is myself. I think it a fortunate thing that this survivor should not be one of those casual acquaintances who met him and passed on his way, but a trained scholar of his—a pupil—and received always as a friend and intimate, on quite a different footing from that of professional companions who served under him, and regarded him with a "distant and awful respect." I insist on this little difference to show with what superior advantage I was enabled to associate with him.*

I may here just sketch out the incidents which first brought me into connection with Charles Dickens and his journals—a trivial matter enough, but of interest to myself as showing his long course of generous kindness to me, and one which changed the whole course of my life.

I was then a young man of eager literary tastes and enthusiasm, an ardent reader and student, a writer too, as I fancied—for had I not written one paper in *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal!* How proud that made me. I had just read with enthusiasm and delight the story of Goldsmith's life, written with great charm and romantic feeling by a barrister named John Forster, who, it was announced, was following it with a Life of the great Dean Swift. Now here again I was enthusiastic. I was in Dublin, a city which at that time, nigh fifty years ago, literally abounded in relics and memorials of the Dean, but which have long since been swept away. A strange youthful notion came into my head that I might serve the biographer in my own way. At this moment can be seen in the South Kensington Museum a number of water-colour sketches, rather spirited and effective, of all these localities—Marsh's Library, where he read, and where he made "marginal notes;" Hoey's Court, where he was born; St. Patrick's, where he officiated—I even went down to

---

* Since his death, now over forty years ago, I have never relaxed storing up records and memorials of him. These are to be found everywhere, and in all shapes. In the Pump Room at Bath is a bust of him by myself, really a fair likeness. Another is at Rochester in the Eastgate House, which I think is worth noting, as it supplies the pained, strained look which his features wore in his last days. Here, too, is my large Dickens Library, with other relics and curios, presented to the city. Rochester might have had a large bronze statue of my own making placed in the open street to show to all visitors the city's connection with the novelist, but for the protests of his own family. At the Prudential Offices in London, which are built on the site of the old Furnivals Inn, where Boz had chambers, the directors have placed yet another bust of my work under the entrance archway. These testimonials prove that I am not deficient in grateful feeling to my eminent master and friend.

Celbridge and sketched there. There were manuscripts also. In short, I made up a useful collection and, boldly daring, sent them to the biographer, who was enchanted. On the day that packet arrived in town I gained a valuable friend for life—later and through him *his* friend, even more valuable—thousands of pounds in cash, a new, lucrative and enjoyable profession, a reputation—such as it is—that spread even to the States. No wonder that I often look at these little sketches as though they had been a magic talisman, for to them all was owing. His projected Life of the great Dean, however, never got beyond the first volume: the author was always collecting for it, but had never collected enough.

Dickens at that time was in his full glory. Every eye was turned towards him. He was a figure in the State. It is really impossible to give an idea of his attraction. His books were public *assets :* each green-coated number as it came out was literally devoured by an admiring community. And this particularly should be borne in mind: that all his special quips and humours were then utter novelties—such as had never been heard before; now, after fifty or sixty years' reading, we are well accustomed to them. His sayings were all taken into common talk and became proverbial (the father of a family, perhaps, being named in the home circle "The aged P."). Nowadays we can hardly realise all this. We have nobody of such magic temperament to look to. Even a George Meredith excited no such emotion.

I may say here that he indeed was a lucky beginner who was so fortunate as to secure the friendship of so influential and remarkable a man as John Forster. Finding that I was engaged in writing articles for trifling magazines, he took charge of a short story and undertook to put it before the great man of *Household Words.* My friend, as will be seen later, was a tremendous, over-powering personality, burly in figure: a great human argosy, he "bore down" on all and carried his way. With him there was no trifling or putting off with excuses, especially where a friend or protégé was concerned. It was long a tradition of the *Household Words* office how the great Forster strode in one day, his stick sloped over his shoulder, and, casting down the paper, bade them sternly see to it that there should be no official subterfuges, circulars and the like, it *must* be considered and *read*, mark you! At this time it seemed that the journal was a sort of *mare clausum.* Everyone sent their contributions; whole sacks arrived which it was impossible to deal with. But though it was professed in a "consolation circular" that the returned paper had been read and considered, it is likely that the judgment was founded on other elements, viz. the subject, title, writing, and perhaps a glance at a page or two. At the same time, Boz was willing to welcome any really new style of writing whatever, no matter whence it came, and with this aim in view relied on the aid of intelligent friends who would introduce talent. By a happy chance that paper exactly suited the taste of the editor, and was really considered a striking success, so that I was on the instant required to help in the Christmas number then impending; and I really think, during the thirteen years that followed, it must have put into my hands many thousand pounds—the liberal guerdon of the ever-generous Boz.

In all the inscriptions under the many busts that I have made of him, I have always proudly set out that they are the work of "his friend and pupil." Pupil! some will cry; that is surely an exaggeration. But it is the exact truth. For instance, each of the five or six novels I wrote for him was planned and debated with him—the characters, the story as it advanced, the embarrassing tangles which he resolved, the very titles. Then every line almost he revised and corrected.

I often turn back and think with emotion of his gentle tolerance, and how he would spare me when I was often seriously in fault. I have had a long experience of the panorama of life, and have seen pass before me and by me an endless train of acquaintances and pseudo-friends and friends of every degree; yet I will conscientiously say, as if on oath, that I never met anyone to approach Charles Dickens in his kindly, affectionate, generous behaviour. No friend that I ever had ever treated me as he did: I can actually say that he never refused me anything. As his son Henry once said in public, I was "a favourite of his." Why, I know not. There was no caprice—he was the same ever, when—I blush to own it—at times I took things rather easily with him, and stood aside.*

From this point may be shown in detail the stages of this most precious intimacy, lasting on nigh fifteen years, to within a week or so of his death.

For a long time I was in the ranks of the common contributors to his *Journal*, and with the rest was at an admiring distance; but on one of his reading tours he chanced to pass by our way, and I received somewhat formal but kindly letters from him.

---

* As when one night at a country theatre I persisted in sitting by myself in a shady corner, and leaving him alone the whole night because my eyes were excessively weak. He was hurt, I saw, but it made no difference to him. He had wonderful patience and bore with everybody, and that patience I tried often.

GAD'S HILL PLACE,
HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER,
KENT,
Monday, Ninth August, 1858.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am exceedingly obliged to you for your kind note, and I cordially assure you that I have received it with much pleasure and interest, as coming from a fellow-labourer whose writings I highly esteem.

I am not the less sensible of your proffered hospitality because I cannot accept it. But my tour is of such a very fatiguing nature that I know it to be impossible to unite any social enjoyments with its business. I have, therefore, forsworn all pleasure engagements whatsoever during its progress. I accept no invitations, see no one, and am perfectly heroic against my nature and my will.

Believe me,
My dear Sir,
Faithfully yours,
CHARLES DICKENS.

PERCY FITZGERALD, ESQUIRE.

The reader may like to have my first impressions of this unique man—written I suppose some fifty years ago—which I found in an old Diary.

Tuesday.

One of those red-letter nights in my life was last night, when I heard Dickens's charming and artistic and refined performance—perhaps enjoyed it more than anything for some years. Those exquisite bits of humour of his own seem to me as if incapable of being *pointed* by anyone else, for he seemed to give them that point and emphasis which the author alone could do, which we lack when reading ourselves—not the farce actor's smart turn and rapid cockney enunciation, which now seems to be the proper fashion, but a slower, richer humour. Everybody was delighted, enchanted—convulsions of the most genuine laughter and keenest enjoyment I have ever witnessed.

Thursday.

This has been a gala week with me by reason of this great man. Saw him in street on Tuesday, and spent a feverish day tracking him about the town. Then wrote and received back such a note! Good nature and geniality in every line—announcing too that he would call on me this day.

Friday.

Dickens came not after all, but good-naturedly sent his card by post. Saw him walking along across town and stepping out gallantly like a man, but had not courage, by reason of Smith, his agent, who was with him.

Monday.

Made a bold resolution that I *would* go this morning and waylay him at South-Western Railway. Walked there, at last saw a cab arrive with portmanteaux on roof labelled C.D. and A.W.W.S. Charles D. got out. He was in a check suit: he looked a fine, bold, well-made, sturdy, striding Englishman, with the redness (not of paint, as we fancied) but of glowing health on his face. I watched nervously till he was by himself standing at the carriage door reading a newspaper (I see him now), then screwing up my courage, went up to him: "I beg your pardon, Mr. Dickens, but my name is Percy Fitzgerald." A violent and hearty shake, up and down, from him. "How *do* you do? I am very glad to see you," etc. (All spoken in a strong "burr" or accent.) *Ego:* "I hope you will excuse me, Mr. Dickens, but I am going to Paris to-morrow for a couple of months, and I should have been dreadfully disappointed not to have seen you and spoken to you." He said that he had just been to Belfast. "Tremendous houses, curious people, they seem all Scotch, but quite in a state of transition. I walked a long way by sea to Carrickfergus. Had a letter from Forster yesterday. He 's worried to death with old Landor's business. (Laughs.) What a pity." "Yes," I say, "and he is so wrong-headed." "Yes," says Dickens, snatching at the word, "that 's it: so very wrong-headed, and yet there 's a great deal behind that. He 's the finest and most chivalrous old fellow in the world!" "You know him well?" "Lord bless you, yes! Known him for years. Why it was all to protect a poor governess, nothing else." "Is he rich? A mark for the damages?" "Lord, no! Not he! He won't pay a penny of it. He is in Florence now—has signed over every halfpenny of his fortune. You have seen the case?" Then comes up Smith. Introduction. "Mr. F. says there was another train," etc. "By the way," says Smith, "it was Mr. F. that we were going to ask to do that little job for us." "So it was," says Dickens, "so it was—to get us the jaunting-cars—one for him, one for me. We were going to write to you. Such a nice way of seeing the country; but someone else in Belfast managed it. He said it would be much cheaper than in Dublin." Then, abruptly, "Well, Forster is deep in the Swift! I tell him he 'll never get through it. But he does go at a thing with all his soul."

I mention that "I have seen an advertisement showing it was somewhat near at hand." "Oh, Lord, no. *He 'll* never have done it, never." And he was to prove right in this forecast.

He said that he would not be home again till November. Now I think it time to part, as it is cold, and so take my leave, receiving another hearty shake. All the while his words were spoken in a sharp, jerky way, off-hand to a degree, but very engaging.

It would be impossible to give an idea of his cordial heartiness during this talk, and the perfect genuineness of his welcome—not, however, more cordial than the long series of welcomes I was happily destined to receive from him during a period of many years. A favourite phrase of his will be noted: "Lord bless you, sir!"

I was struck during our talk with the calm, quiet assurance of his aide-de-camp, a strong man evidently, with a strong arm to lean upon—invaluable to Dickens. I noted, too, the uneasy twinkle in Boz's eye as he heard my first words—he had been waylaid—caught by some enthusiast—then instant relief.

Declining all hospitality offered to him, he wrote to me as follows:—

Morrison's Hotel,
Tuesday evening, Twenty-seventh August, 1858.

My dear Sir,

A thousand thanks for your letter. But my availing myself of your kindness is quite impossible. I read to-morrow afternoon at 3, and you may faintly imagine (but not sufficiently) what my correspondence is with London, when I get a few hours to devote to it.

I shall hope to see you before I leave this, that is to say some time on Thursday morning, when I shall do myself the pleasure of calling on you. It will give me great pleasure to assure you personally of the interest and satisfaction I shall have in seeing you in London when you come there.

Pray believe that I shall be delighted to know you better, and that my present determination is a "hard" one to myself, and is not in the least meritorious.

Faithfully yours always,
CHARLES DICKENS.

Percy Fitzgerald, Esquire.

Little did I think that later he would write to me: "It is always a pleasure to hear from you; and this is no mere compliment."

After this fortunate meeting our intimacy grew from acquaintance into regard or esteem. An unmannerly attack having been made on him in the Dublin papers on the score of a harmless Irish sketch—more of which later—I rushed forward to defend him. He was pleased, and wrote:

OFFICE OF "ALL THE YEAR ROUND."
(*A Weekly Journal conducted by Charles Dickens.*)

No. 11 WELLINGTON STREET NORTH,
STRAND, LONDON, W.C.,
Tuesday, Second August, 1859.

MY DEAR MR. FITZGERALD,

I am heartily obliged for your letter. I had previously seen it, and felt very thankful to the writer.

Of the extraordinary coarse and unreasonable attacks I have seen on myself personally—so easily elicited by an innocently meant article in which I saw no harm when I read it in proof, and the desperate offence of which I do not even now understand—I will only remark that they have amazed me for life. The English language is really new to me in such an association.

Many thanks for what you offer concerning the French Revolution. But I am *at present* afraid to look at those matters of interest; they might tempt me out of my story; and I have its track before me, and am especially anxious to walk in it.

I shall hope to see you at Gad's, not thirty miles from London, and if you could spare a day or two for its fine walks, I and my two latest dogs—a St. Bernard and a Bloodhound—would be charmed with your company as one of ourselves.

Believe me,
Very faithfully yours,
CHARLES DICKENS.

PERCY FITZGERALD, ESQUIRE.

One point of most attractive interest, which I fancy made me somewhat interesting to him, was our common interest in *dogs:* their ways and adventures. He would listen with never-flagging pleasure to all that I had to tell him on this favourite topic, and I had much to tell him. The whole history and adventures of my own faithful creatures—of Vixen the first and Vixen the second, as well as of the great Newfoundland Cæsar, are set forth at length in his Journals. This common delight in the honest tribe was an important link.

I once wrote a paper for one of the magazines on his *described* dogs, giving it the rather happy title of "The Landseer of Fiction," in which were collected all his telling portraits from Boxer onwards. For this trifle he was actually unboundedly grateful, and expressed himself so to me many a time. He felt that I understood him thoroughly, and in his own way. With this was blended the old association of the dog as a performer on the melodramatic stage, where again I was much at home, and contributed to his humorous vein. The dear old melodrama, *The Dog of Montargis,* how often we talked of *that!* He loved these old melodramas and their fossil methods, and he noted my enthusiastic sympathies. We both believed in them. The dog was trained to fly fiercely at his master's throat, who played the suspected murderer, and to drag him to the ground, where he appeared to be ferociously struggling to throttle him. How pleasantly and with invented comic touches would he relate a scene where one of these "performing" animals at this critical point had relaxed in his struggles; when his master, lying on the ground over-powered, could be heard loudly cursing his animal, fiercely calling on him to come forward and seize him by the throat! How, too, on one occasion the dog, instead of attending to the imprecation, walked gravely down to the front, and seating himself leisurely, panted good-humouredly and with his distended jaws at the audience.

I myself had a sort of connection with this dog of Montargis, which amused and interested him. There was an actor of Irish parts, Hudson, who had a noble, sagacious Newfoundland with whom he used to play in this piece, and who, I believe, was much the better actor of the two. It was noble to see him spring at his wicked master's neck and bear him to the ground, where he seemed to be throttling him until he was dragged off. We were so delighted with the animal that he was bought for the sum of ten guineas, and cheap he was. He did extraordinary things.

You might visit a house and walk away leaving your glove on the table, after showing it to him. After a quarter of a mile's walking, all the while surveying you interrogatively with his noble face, he would, on being bidden, rush away, force his way into the house against all obstacles and bring off the article in triumph! It was dangerous to interfere with him. Unhappily he drank some paint, carelessly left about, a not too sagacious proceeding, and so died. I had to write all his adventures for the journal—"The Renowned Dog Cæsar." This sympathy I know was what seriously inclined Dickens to my humble self. No one else of his set I am certain had ever heard of the Dog of Montargis or its humours, or cared about it, nor had they any associations with the old melodramas, such as *The Brigand* or the *Miller and his Men,* which latter worthy old piece was literally bound up with his precious childish memories.

I had made him a present of a great Spanish hound to be added to his large family of great dogs. He was delighted with the animal and took him into his affections. At first Sultan—such was his name—promised exceedingly well.

"Sultan has grown immensely," his master wrote to me, "and is a sight. But he is so accursedly fierce towards other dogs, that I am obliged to take him out muzzled. Also he has an invincible repugnance for soldiers, which in a military country is inconvenient. Such is the spirit of the dog that, with his muzzle tight on, he dashed into the heart of a company in heavy marching order (only the other day) and pulled down an objectionable private. Except under such provocation, he is as gentle and docile with me as a dog can possibly be."

He inspired his good master to write this lively sketch of his performances:—

"The other night the gardener fired at some man in the garden, upon whom he came suddenly, and who kicked him in a dangerous manner. I immediately turned out, unloosed Sultan, and hunted the vagabond. We couldn't get hold of him, but the intelligence of the dog, and the delighted confidence he imparted to me as we stumbled across country in the dark were quite enchanting. Two policemen appearing in the distance, and making a professional show of stealthiness, had a narrow escape. As he was in the act of flying at them, I was obliged to hold him round the neck with both arms (like the little boy in the snow with the St. Bernard dog, grown up), and call to the Force to vanish in an inglorious manner.

"A friend has sent me from America a thoroughbred young black Newfoundland dog since you were here. Sultan (who hates him mortally), he, Linda, I and three or four small dogs in the nature of canine parasites and toadies make a show in the lanes and roads, which I especially beseech you to come and see. We only want the renowned dog Cæsar to render us matchless.

"I hope your are in force and spirit with your new story."

The latent savagery of the unhappy mastiff was presently to break out. One day when a little girl was passing the gate he seized her and bit her arm ferociously. She was with difficulty rescued. A court martial sat upon him at once, to satisfy the neighbours, and he was sentenced to be shot next morning..

Dickens, though feeling the loss of his favourite, could not resist the humorous associations of the scene.*

"Your mention of the late Sultan," he wrote to me, "touches me nearly. He was the finest dog I ever saw, and between him and me there was a perfect understanding. But to adopt the popular phrase, it was so very confidential that it 'went no further.' He would fly at anybody else with the greatest enthusiasm for destruction. I saw him, muzzled, bound into the heart of a regiment of the Line; and I have frequently seen him, muzzled, hold a great dog down with his chest and feet. He has broken loose (muzzled), and come home covered with blood again and again. And yet he never disobeyed me, unless he had first laid hold of a dog.

"You heard of his going to execution, he evidently supposing the procession to be a party detached in pursuit of something to kill and eat? It was very affecting. And also of his bolting a blue-eyed kitten, and making me acquainted with the circumstance by his agonies of remorse (or indigestion?).

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* Forster, always uncompromising, loudly expressed his dissent as to the policy of the execution. He thought it needless, and he did not see that it was called for by the community, which is always inflamed in such cases and requires blood.

"I cannot find out that there is any one in Rochester (a sleepy old city) who has anything to tell about Garrick, except what is not truth. His brother, the wine merchant, would be more in their way."

It is amusing to note how Boz's acute sense of a comical scene quite overpowered his natural feelings of sympathy for the unlucky animal. Certainly his picture drawn of the funeral is richly humorous.

On my first visit to Gad's Hill I cannot forget one delightful day when I was taken by him as cicerone round Rochester—its noble old castle, where we sat among the ruins, he cracking pleasant jests as Jingle did (I see him now seated on a stone, with the old ruins rising majestically around him), thence on to the "Bull" and the Seven Poor Travellers Hospice, where I was struck with the rather careless, *de haut en bas* bearing of the woman in charge. I did not at the moment think that he had just been waging war on the abuses in the place. She took him certainly very easily. How wonderfully, by the charm of his magical touch and a few lines from his pen, did he give a sort of perpetual celebrity to a hitherto obscure almshouse!

We then walked over to Cobham, when he told me a good deal about the then Lord Darnley, whom he said he liked, and showed me the chain drawn across the avenue never removed except for a funeral. This I am positive he told me, but many years afterwards one of the family took it up rather warmly, and protested that such a thing was utterly unknown to them.*

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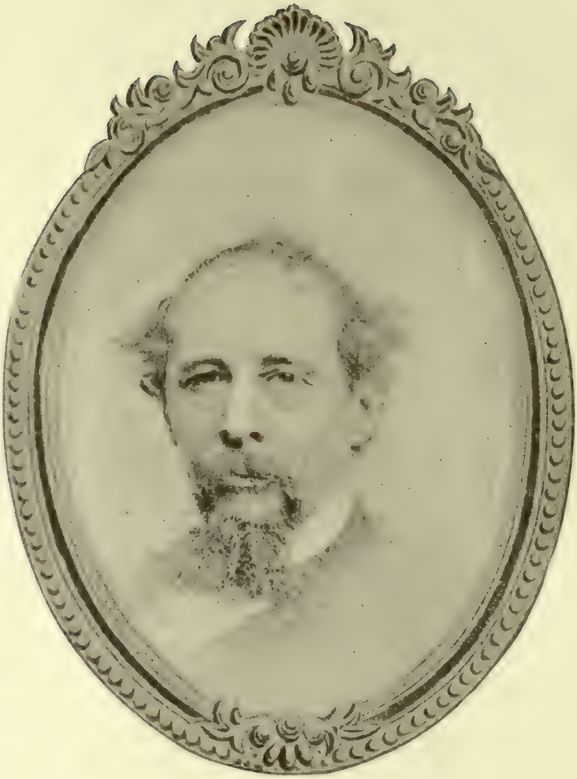
* There has lately been a controversy as to "Honeymoon Cottage" being the exact house where he stayed for his honeymoon, a tablet of my workmanship celebrating the event. On this day I and my pleasant cicerone walked through Chalk and he pointed out a grotesquely-carved monster over some door. But he said nothing of any house where he had stayed under such interesting circumstances.

There was one matter connected with my pleasant host which always brought me trouble. That was the long, the very long walks, at "full speed ahead," to which I had to submit. At starting all was well; but the pace soon began to tell, and I gradually relaxed and fell behind. This I saw was a great burden on his vigorous forward progress. He was constantly looking behind, not understanding why I could not keep up with him. I was soon obviously distressed, when he would relax a little, but presently had shot ahead, while I toiled on behind—like Johnson's "panting time."

How pleasant and varied were those Gad's Hill nights. There was ever a festive tone over the place due to the buoyant spirit of the owner which pervaded every corner. Witness the pleasant entertainment when he invited his friends and neighbours to attend and listen to a sort of rehearsal of one of his readings. How gay was our dinner, and how handsome and lavish. His hospitality never relaxed, and the cooking was always superior. His admirable sister-in-law saw to this for him, and many were the excellent tit-bits we enjoyed. After dinner one of the large rooms was set out. The experiment was to be made as it were *in corpore vili* to see how his now selected piece would go down with a crowd. He chose something out of *Barbox Brothers* and something out of *Mugby Junction* (I remember the sturdy Forster, who never compromised, saying to me, "I cannot tolerate that refreshment paper. It seems to me to go over the line. The ridicule isn't quite fair"). I must confess it—though everybody there was prepared to applaud with all hearts and hands—the thing seemed a little ineffective. It was, indeed, felt by all—to conviction point—that it would not do for performance. He himself at once



CHARLES DICKENS
(AGED ABOUT 50).

Showing Boz in full health and spirits, with fresh, unwrinkled cheeks, in contrast to the worn and well-lined face of later times.

saw the failure, and reverted to the old safe répertoire.

There were now for me constant repetitions of these ever welcome invitations, and it will be seen from the next letter that one invitation, accepted or not, was only to lay the foundation for another from this ever hospitable man.

Friday, Seventh July, 1865.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

I shall be delighted to see you at Gad's Hill on Sunday, and I hope you will bring a bag with you, and will not think of returning to London at night.

We are a small party just now, for my daughter Mary has been decoyed to Andover for the election week—in the Conservative interest; think of my feelings as a Radical parent! The wrong-headed member and his wife are the friends with whom she hunts, and she helps to receive (and *de*ceive) the voters, which is very awful.

But in the week after this next we shall be in great croquet force, so I shall hope to persuade you to come back to us then for a few days, and we will try to make you some amends for a dull Sunday. Turn it over in your mind, and try to manage it.

Sincerely yours ever,
CHARLES DICKENS.

PERCY FITZGERALD, ESQUIRE.

From Diary:—

OF A VISIT TO GAD'S HILL.

August 3rd, 1865.

This day have just come home from dear Gad's Hill, having started on June 26th. The old story, a *miserable* journey with the soreness that sets in on the side of the heart, as I sit confined in the carriage, something so desolate. But all right so soon as the journey is over.

I really shrank from it yesterday in London, knowing all so well.

Such pictures as I was looking back to. Such as the main street of Stevenage on the Guild day, which seemed akin to something else seen before—that community of enjoyment and interest which a common expedition brings. The two girls above all, and the dearer Charles, both leaning on his arm in the blue saloon carriage when going, he listening and chuckling at everything, but without talking much.

Charming days—such pictures of that visit to look back to.

Let me think of the dinner at "Gad's" (as he loved to call it) after the cricket match, sitting next Mamie, who called me over as we went in. So pretty the whole look of the thing . . . Such a night as that was, that dear Charles so splendidly brilliant in his finding out words in the "small-plays" game, such as "The Powder in Gunpowder Plot." He succeeded in getting at Guy Fawkes, etc., but no further. Then there was "The Lantern at a Railway Station." Mine was "The Signpost at the Falstaff Inn." On another occasion he actually found out the impossible "left leg of a postilion's boot" I told him of. He so delighted with himself after they had gone. Our talk, "je ne change qu'en mourant," which the lady sent to her lover with a leaf, and which he ungallantly returned with a sketch of a shirt with the motto, "J'en change tous les jours." This amused him. . . . Sitting on the grass all day during the cricket match.

CHAPTER II

THE DAY AT KNEBWORTH. AFFECTION FOR CHRISTMAS. THE BANGOR SHIPBROKER.

I RECALL one much-celebrated literary festival, long since forgotten—and little wonder, for it is nigh fifty years ago—held at Knebworth by Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, for the opening of a sort of Retreat for old and decayed actors. All writers of whatever light and leading repaired in force to it, and a delightful, happy gala day it was. I stayed at Gad's Hill, and came on with Dickens and his party. What a fair festival cloud is over it all—a long fifty years ago, and nearly every performer whose name I recall vanished for ever. I consult the old Diary again.

"What charming pictures, well worth looking back to. First the kindness of that charming, amiable family through the whole day. The rest at Gravesend, their all insisting that I was to be late. He was reading Pritchard's execution of the day before—talking to Collins next me so pleasantly. Then I see myself walking with them and Collins in the heat from Charing Cross, I in front with Miss H., up to Regent's Terrace. Then on to the office with Dickens, who looked gayer than ever on that day, actively correcting a proof in the omnibus, and then see myself now buying perfumes for them. At last at Wellington Street, upstairs where, sitting in armchair, absorbed in his book we found the placid Charles Collins. The ladies came in from dressing, as brilliant as possible.

Then going down to look at the huge orange and red label of Collins's new story stretched out on floor, Dickens fetching me. (He saying in his humorous way that Wills always corrected the proofs of these monstrous placards, some six or eight feet long, *on the floor*, with his chest on a mattress.) He so festive in dress. Then back to room, wine on table. Then the presenting me with the gloves—we had had a little bet, which the ladies lost—each prettily presenting a pair. I have the whole scene before me. Then our setting out, I with the two sisters in a cab. I remember the passing so well through Seven Dials, all the party in great spirits.

"Such a scene at Great Northern—the huge station, with the bustle, the vast platform and Wills coasting and hurrying about with a list! A carriage was reserved for us, we hurrying to secure it. Then the strange men, the Yates's, Halliday's, Hollingshead's, etc., Dickens' own followers, etc. Charles Knight coming up and worrying the two girls, a dreadful old man, but Charles speaking so kindly to him and listening with reverent look. Yates looking with curiosity at me, as who should say 'How did *he* get in there?' Finally we get off.

"What fun in the carriage during the two short trips, the green counties flying by, the fine day, and all in such spirits, jests, etc; Dickens talking his full to me; how he had had his hat 'ironed,' sent over the way to Pitt's. Then putting on his gloves, I pretending that mine had given way. Getting Dickens to tell about Ada Menken (I see his face now). More trees, more green, more country roads. . . . Such stories, he so jolly, such persiflage. The three opposite looking so charming and pleased. Then at last we reach Stevenage, the crowd there at the station. There stood Forster, full of importance: the carriage, I and Collins in our 'rumble.'

"Then the Guild house, the pretty garden, going over the rooms, the party so confidential and pleasant. Such a happy day! Then driving on to the scene of action through the green lanes, fine trees, etc., passing policemen; thence up to the door of grand old Knebworth, like an old Elizabethan palace. We got down, went in, poured out on the garden at the other side, where all the company were gathered on the walk. Dickens so nice, taking the lead, going up to Sir E. B. standing leaning on his stick. Such a curious fact to think of myself there. We all wandered here and there, they meeting that foreign woman; the gardens spreading out so charmingly, vases, statues, high hedges, etc. All the Guilders hanging about. Forster pacing along in great state and dignity, full of importance. How pleasant it was, the gardens, the look of the house and the company. Then Forster coming after a time to take 'Katie' into lunch. The great hall, music, they all confidentially angry with me: I, the intimate friend of that impressive day. Then we had to troop out. Then at last lunch."

Pursued as he was by all, not to say *hunted*, Boz very thoughtfully contrived to bring me upstairs to a sort of a retired chamber, where we saw an Eastern potentate sitting on luxurious cushions, with dreamy eyes and reposeful manner, smoking a chibouk, I think. "I must introduce you to Sir Edward," he had said, and he did so; to his old friend Lytton Bulwer or Bulwer Lytton at choice. This interesting man received me very cordially, and was gracious enough to recall and to praise certain things I had written.

It was a curious feeling to think of myself in such a brilliant scene with the background of the old stately castle, the enormous crowd flitting to and fro, now in the house, now in the huge gardens. Our party wandering about here and there. Boz in the highest spirits, gay as a bridegroom with his flower, bright costume, hat set a *little* on one side. He was alive to all the half-comedy impressions. The image of Forster, who had by solemn commission been constituted the august owner's deputy (the noble owner posing as though he were too delicate to act as host), delighted him. I noted Forster moving majestically along, big with importance. When returning home I half complained to Boz of his lofty, perhaps condescending, bearing to myself. What did it mean ? "Lord bless you," cried Boz, in a tumult of enjoyment, "why he *didn't see me !* He wouldn't, I should say. He was in the clouds, like Malvolio."

I see Forster constantly striding away as on some awful mission from *himself*. Later in the day he spared me a few, very few, lofty words—encouraging too.

Another incident that tickled Boz hugely was our progress from the station—it was a half mile or so distant—when in our open carriage we passed the Inn, newly re-christened "Our Mutual Friend," in compliment to the celebrated visitor. On the rude benches in front under the sign-post were seated many *soi-disant* "literary gents" refreshing themselves, for the day was most sultry. As Boz passed all rose and acclaimed him ! What a merry twinkle was in his eyes as he recognised his "literary brethren" thus regaling themselves with their "native pewter," etc. The scene was droll enough, and had quite a "Pickwick" flavour. Forster was on grave duty, being empowered to "sort out" the company into their respective carriages.

His manner seemed strained, and he scarcely spoke, so oppressed seemed he with the grandeur of his power.

Looking back to this far-off festive day, I think nothing so much could show what was the position of the premier story-teller of the time. Here he was the centre of all, seeming almost *royal* in the homage paid to him. It was well understood that the attraction was not in the Actors' Retreat, or in the noble owner, or in sentiment, but in the one and only Boz, who, as he wrote on and on, had come to be as much liked and loved as he was read. Yet there seemed to be thought nothing extraordinary in the lofty position; it became, as it were, a thing of course. We have only to turn our eyes to the present condition of literary things to be struck with the contrast. We may now look round in vain for anyone even of small pre-eminence, or for anyone with the singular combination of being foremost in all the arts of fiction, as well as foremost in all the teachings of peace and goodwill, and in bettering the conditions of the poorest of his fellow-creatures. Such was Dickens. And again, who that is at all prominent in the art of writing books can offer the same spectacle of what might be termed an ostentatious modesty. Never was a being thus brilliantly endowed so modest, so retiring even, so eager to give place to others, to bring forward others, to listen to others; in fact, this modesty might be considered the most conspicuous and attractive of his many gifts.

"Then," I write in the old Diary, "how delightful was the general lunching in the great hall—the crowd pouring in tumultuously, quite eager after their open-air dancing. Our little party along with the others."

It was a scene to remember when the two great artists, sitting side by side, made their affecting speeches, mostly recalling the old, old days when both were beginning the same career—two obscure youths it might be called, but of the same age, capturing the town with two such brilliant things as *Pelham* and *Pickwick.* That was over thirty years before. And since then, what careers for each ! And there before us were the two brilliant men together. Not less affecting was Boz's tribute to the old, old friend and comrade. At that moment I doubt if they were not the most unique pair in the land. The one dramatist, poet, politician, speaker, satirist ; the other—all that we know. It is a great memory and a happy privilege for me to have witnessed, and, I might say, to have taken a minor part in, the scene.

The rest of the lazy day seems dreamlike, but passed too quickly. The time came when we had to take to our carriages, somewhere I fancy about nine. Then came the railway, when Boz genially chatted of the various comic scenes. How a certain "literary man," all along a subject of alarm and anxiety from an almost irresistible failing, had begun to display symptoms during the lunch, but was adroitly carried away by the faithful Wills, without giving any scandal, and sent on his way to the " Mutual Friend." Amusing too was his description of how so many of the "literary brethren," finding the amenities at the Castle hardly to their liking and tedious, had also dropped away to the same hospitable tavern. The pleasant James Payn, presently to be a friend of my own, had timidly approached him before starting for a few words, and I remember Boz speaking highly of his talent in a new book called "The Lost Sir Massingberd." Once there came a stoppage, in a tunnel I think, and I saw that he grew much disturbed, and no wonder, for he had scarcely recovered from the shock of the Staplehurst catastrophe.

On reaching London, we found that our intrepid conductor had more enjoyment in store for us, for placing us in two hansoms, he brought us joyously to the *Household Words* office, that bijou of a tenement, where we found a most dainty little repast set out—cold game, a huge *pâté de foie gras* from "Fortnum's" (you may depend, he would say, on getting everything good there—wine particularly, etc.). But we had to make all speed, for the South-Eastern would not wait even for *him.* Still, we were not hurried, and so came up two more hansoms, and we reached the station in good time.

It was near midnight when we got to Gravesend, and found a bright moonlight drive awaiting us on an Irish jaunting-car, driven in person by Dickens. And how pleasant that drive was as we bowled along the whitened high road, which he knew by heart, reflecting back the moonlight, soon entering through the Gad's Hill gateway. So this memorable red-letter day came to an end, the pictures of which, besides their own interest, supply a valuable picture of this great and most amiable man.

From the Diary, later :—

Tuesday.

One of the pleasant episodes in life just finished. Forster come and gone. Don't know when I liked a man more, so genial and satisfactory to talk with. Never flagged a moment. Told me a good deal of Dickens.

Pleasant picture of his day. Writes all morning until 1.0. No one allowed to interrupt him or see him. Then lunch. Then walking until dinner. Evening he reads in his own room, door kept open so as to hear the girls play.

"Carlyle's proofs," he said, "cost three or four times amount of original setting up — so many corrections." Dickens reading out at Christmas his books to them in advance. Boffin admirable. Shows it all to Forster beforehand, consults with him. His calling his little boys names hereafter to appear in his novels. A little fellow called Plorn for Plornish—really Henry.

This notion of scintillating *brightness* was always to be associated with him. Whatever he did he did brightly. I see him now *darting* here, there and everywhere with extraordinary elasticity and a quite juvenile ardour: all with his grand aim of "keeping everything going." And he *did* keep all going. Then you would see hurried consultation with his two pleasing daughters—his sisters they looked like. Where was the antique "Fogie" element? This was the most astonishing thing of all—the "springyness," the natural juvenility, ever ready, ever present.

I have preserved a copy of the numbers of a little household journal kept by his youngest child, then about twelve years old, chronicling the names of guests and visitors. In the copy I can find my own name, and it brings up the memory of some happy nights.

It besides "amused the friends very much," just as Mr. Magnus's proceedings did. The little newspaper, it will be seen, gives a report of this happy junketing.

1

THE
GAD'S HILL GAZETTE

August 5th 1865 Price 2d

The management of the railway companies seems still to be in the same blundering & negligent state as it has been for some time, and more especially that of the Great Northern. As an instance of this, we annex the following. On Saturday evening, Chas Dickens Esqre, accompanied by the rest of the residents & visitors at Gad's Hill (who had been to Knebworth for the day)* were returning to London, when their journey was delayed by some wandering luggage trains, causing some danger & much inconvenience.

* For their visit to Knebworth see next page

Arrivals & Departures

P Fitzgerald Esqre left on Tuesday 1st. The visitors and residents of Gad's Hill, comprising P Fitzgerald Esqre, Mr & Mrs C Collins, C Dickens Esqre, Miss Dickens, and Miss Hogarth left on Saturday and returned very early next morning (1 o' clock a.m).
C Dickens junr Esqre arrived on Friday and left on the next day.

2

Miscellaneous

The Gad's Hill party went to Knebworth on Saturday morning to view the new houses, built by the Society of the Guild, Literature, & Art.

A very handsome lunch was given by Sir E B Lytton Bart, in the course of which he, and C Dickens Esqre delivered two brilliant speechs. Dancing then followed, and the Gad's Hill party, who had spent a very pleasant day returned late at night.

Since we published our list, we are proud to annex the names of two new subscribers to it viz Mrs Stunt and A Halliday Esqre.

We beg to acknowledge the receipt of letters on business from The Dean of Bristol, Miss Ely, C Kent Esqre, A Halliday Esqre, Miss Boyle and W H Humphery Esqre M P.

We are glad to inform our readers that Linda is much better.

The school children were to have had their annual treat on Tuesday last ; but owing to the inclemency of the weather, it was postponed till next week.

4

LATEST INTELLIGENCE.

Miss Dickens and Mrs Collins went to London, this morning (Friday) and are to return this evening, accompanied by M Stone Esqre. Ch Dickens Esqre left on Wednesday.

In Page 2, there is a missprint. Instead of The Guild, Literature & Art, read—The Guild ' OF ' &c.

H Dickens is the present champion at billiards.

Once staying at Bangor, where was also staying in great and suitable state the redoubtable John Forster, the "harbitrary gent"—a nickname which all the time flattered him a good deal—we passed, during one of our walks, what seemed a grotesque spectacle enough. A retired pilot, living by the sea in a lonely cottage, had conceived the quaint fancy of collecting together all the varied patterns of vessels' "figure-heads," and had *planted* them, as it were, in his back garden with the quaintest effect. All—Queens Charlotte and Victoria, admirals and sea captains—were seen grouped in odd fashion, staring, with the usual *bent*-back attitude and glaring eyes, at the visitors.

The drollery of all this struck me, with the oddity of their seeming to grow out of the ground. Forster was delighted, and *more suo* began to point out the special humour of the collection. How it would affect Dickens. "The very thing for the Christmas Number"—topics which I had just been pressing on him.

I lost no time in describing it to Boz as humorously as I could, putting it all in such a light as would fetch him. This grotesque ship-breaker's notion quite caught his fancy, but there were difficulties in the way, and he had to discard it—a mistake, I think. How amiable and thoughtful as always his almost apologetic excuses for not "using" the subject sent to him, and how quaint the illustration of the pat of butter.

GAD'S HILL PLACE,
HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER, KENT,
Thursday, Thirteenth November, 1865.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

I should have answered your last note long ago, but for having been so perpetually occupied.

That notion of the ship-breaker's garden takes my fancy strongly. If I had not been already at work upon the Xmas No. when you suggested it to me, I think I must have tried my hand upon it. As it is, I often revert to it, and go about and about it, and pat it into new forms, much as the buttermen in the shops (who have something of a literary air at their wooden desks) pat the butter. I have been vexed by not being able to get your story into Dr. Marigold. I tried it again and again, but *could not* adapt its length to the other requirements of the No. Once, I cut it; but I was not easy afterwards, and thought it best to restore the excision, and leave the whole for a regular No. The difficulty of fitting and adjusting this annual job is hardly to be imagined without trying it. For the rest, I hope you will like the Doctor, and know him at once, as he speaks for himself in the first paper and the last. Also I commend to your perusal a certain short story headed, "To be taken with a grain of salt."

In all his letters to myself there is ever a delightful, intimate, confidential strain; dealing now with business topics, thence passing to the most friendly treatment.

I often think of a promenade from the Higham station at the Christmas season, a couple of miles' walk I think it was in the gloaming, the snow lying thick on the ground, which spread away in rolling fields, lights twinkling in far-off houses. It seemed like the Pickwickians walking to Dingley Dell. He had come down to the station to meet us. We were a party of half a dozen, trudging on; Dolby, his manager, was in the group, having come down to hear the new piece rehearsed and judge of the effect. He certainly introduced a professional tone, for he was not over-refined, but loud and a little noisy. He had the art, however, of now and then making his chief laugh.

As we walked on I could hear him now and again engaged in this office. It is wonderful how a little absurd or trivial thing clings to the memory, and I distinctly recall—though it is nigh fifty years ago—his saying that someone had completely " bested " him, or he had " bested " someone, and that Boz asked, " Where on earth did you get that word ? " and then Dolby proceeded laboriously to give an explanation. His talk, however, was generally professional, and garnished with professional allusions and reminiscences of oddities he had met at the offices, etc.

CHAPTER III

AUTHOR'S NOVEL FOR "A.Y.R." SIR E. BULWER'S APPRECIATION. DICKENS' RELISH OF GROTESQUE SITUATIONS AND STORIES. "THE DREADFUL DOCTOR." "THE MILLER AND HIS MEN." "OLD ROGERS." LOSS OF WILLS.

As I look back to this engaging and good-natured editor, I grow perfectly astonished at his kindness, generosity and encouragement. Anything that would bring his young men forward he would do. Thus at an early stage I began pressing to be allowed to venture on some long tale or novel, say a volume in length. "By all means, set to work," he would read it, and if found fit, it should have its place. But mark this, to give it every chance and advantage, it was sent to the printer, and at considerable cost some forty or fifty columns were set up, so that it could be read to the best advantage.*

By and by, however, he was struck by a novel which I had written, called *Bella Donna*, and was then induced to charge me with the duty of writing a regular three-volume serial for his *Journal*. This seemed to me a flattering compliment. The price was £500. I must have been found satisfactory, for I received no less than five similar commissions.

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* "The cheerfullest man of his age," as Johnson said of his friend Garrick after his death. And how curious the parallel—as it has always struck me—between this praise and the exclamation of Carlyle, also after Boz's death: "The good, the noble, the high-souled, the ever friendly Dickens!"

The following letter is of interest in this connection:—

No. 26 Wellington Street,
Strand, London, W.C.,
Wednesday, Twenty-seventh July, 1864.

My dear Mr. Fitzgerald,

First let me assure you that it gave us all real pleasure to see your sister and you at Gad's Hill, and that we all hope you will both come and stay a day or two with us when you are next in England.

Next, let me convey to you the intelligence that I resolve to launch Miss Manuel: fully confiding in your conviction of the power of the story. On all business points Wills will communicate with you. I purpose beginning its publication in our first September No., therefore there is no time to be lost.

The only suggestion I have to make as to the MS. in hand and type is, that Captain Fermor wants relief. It is a disagreeable character—as you mean it to be—and I should be afraid to do so much with him, if the case were mine, without taking the taste of him, here and there, out of the reader's mouth. It is remarkable that if you do not administer a disagreeable character carefully, the public have a decided tendency to think that the story is disagreeable, and not merely the fictitious person.

What do you think of the title, *Never Forgotten.* It is a good one in itself—would express the eldest sister's pursuit, would have a delicate reference to Hanbury—and glanced at now and then in the text, would hold the reader in suspense. I would propose to add the line, *By the Author of Bella Donna.*

Let me know your opinion as to the title. I need not assure you that the greatest care will be taken of you here, and that we shall make you as thoroughly and widely known as we possibly can.

Very faithfully yours,
CHARLES DICKENS.

Wills once, on paying me the sum of £500 for a serial novel, took occasion to tell me that there had been a loss of £100 on the transaction. The worthy, excellent Wills, a shrewd man of business trained in Edinburgh, gently rubbed this in as he handed me the cheque, and said it was rather unfortunate that the office should lose seriously, etc. Knowing that my friend was all important in the office, I without hesitation said that there should be no loss, and at once reduced the above by £100. This was thought uncommonly handsome, and I received many compliments. The liberal Dickens, however, was much displeased, as he told Forster, who told me on the same day. As it was a transaction with the sub-editor, it became awkward for him to interfere. Wills was a partner in the firm besides being sub-editor. The transaction had been completed without his (Boz) knowing anything of the matter. My friend Forster took the same view, and I am afraid thought that I had been a little "soft" in the matter.* But as it proved, I did not lose, for the generous Dickens, who never rested under a compliment or obligation, made it up to me by speedily commissioning a new story on a large scale. Young writers should take this lesson to heart, and never show greediness about money or dispute as to contracts. The proprietors may yield, but they will not forget, and the real loss and more will come by and by.

It is astonishing how these little personal traits of amiability in Boz have not been more put forward. But by and by they will be gathered together from all quarters and read with delight. This will happen as surely as that in due course there will be a clamour for a great and sufficient Memorial to be erected by the aid of the whole kingdom—a homage now intercepted by far-fetched scruples as to his private wishes and aspirations.

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* There had been no actual loss. The "office" disposed of the serials to the publishers, and so recouped themselves. On this occasion they did not receive so much.

Sir E. Bulwer Lytton was a strangely interesting person, with dreamy manner, as I have said, low voice and curious eyes, and the tranquil yet effective way in which he acquitted himself on the Guild Day showed what quiet force there was in him. I always admired the genuine interest he took in the craft of letters, having always that delight in the old profession which rarely leaves a man. He read everything that came out, and with enjoyment.

The following letter from Boz seems to reflect both pride and pleasure—a pride that one of his followers, trained by himself, should have obtained such praise from his old and gifted friend. It seemed to endorse his own judgment, and gave him pleasure on account of the anticipated satisfaction it would bring to his faithful friend and admirer:—

GAD'S HILL PLACE,
HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER,
KENT,
Monday, Sixteenth July, 1866.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

I send you the enclosed note, received yesterday from Bulwer, because I think it may interest and please you. His praise is well worth having, inasmuch as he is a very careful student and an admirable artist.

Faithfully yours always,

CHARLES DICKENS.

"I want to tell you," he wrote to his friend, "that I greatly admire the novel now running. It strikes me to be a really great novel, which is a very rare thing. There are bits about the heroine which show wholesale knowledge of the human heart, and the plot seems hitherto deeply planned and well carried out. It is impossible for any writer who comes after you to escape some obligations to you, and this is shown in one of the characters. But I like the work altogether, and it is original. I am the more surprised at its merit, because I had read some other work by the same reputed writer and had not been much struck by it. It is a better work than *Felix Holt!*" I know what risk there is in printing these lines. What an opening for ridicule and worse! But it served as a flattering encouragement; and it is really a proof of the hearty eagerness with which this interesting man followed the common course of the publications of the day; not accepting merely the official recognised productions, but examining for himself, on the chance of finding what would be entertaining and have merit. In a letter to myself, he explained that he had been "exceedingly struck by the depth of power in all the earlier portions; but with the later numbers I am not quite so well pleased or satisfied; and I believe the reason to be, not in any fault of mere construction, but because towards the close the antagonistic or disagreeable element overpowers the sympathetic or agreeable. I do not know whether you quite understand what I mean." I shall only add that the story was called *The Second Mrs. Tillotson.* Why should I suppress these grateful words?

OFFICE OF "ALL THE YEAR ROUND,"
26 WELLINGTON STREET,
STRAND, W.C.,
Thursday, Eighth February, 1866.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

I send you the enclosed from Procter, just as I received it here last night.

Faithfully yours always,
CHARLES DICKENS.

The little scrap related to a matter that intimately concerned the venerable poet and critic Procter, better known as Barry Cornwall. I was acquainted with him, but much more intimately with his rather tumultuous wife (*née* Skepper), a strange, always outspoken lady. Once when I was praising Forster to her, she broke in with, "I'll tell you what Forster is—he's nothing more or less than a bully!" The poet, on the contrary, was gentle to all men. He had just completed a volume of his *Memoirs of Charles Lamb*, and here was now announced by Mr. Bentley another work by myself on the same subject, to the affectionate consternation of his friends. Forster pressed me in a very feeling way "to hold over" the book; so I think did Boz, or it may have been his delicate mode of appealing to me, to forward the poet's appeal to him. I would have cheerfully yielded to such pressure, but the publisher refused. It was too late. However, no harm was done, nor was harm at all likely.

Many have admired the unfailing geniality and good nature of Dickens, the most striking and unusual instance of which is surely his unbounded generosity in the matter of letters. It was perfectly astonishing to find this gifted man expending his precious and valuable talent, wasting it as it were, in his replies to idle friends, displaying his wit, humour, fun and all manner of comic ideas that would have served for "copy," on even young admirers and old friends. He seemed to put his very best into his letters. They are marvellous performances indeed, and so artistically wrought that they are not to be distinguished from the vivacious *Uncommercial Papers*. But the really amazing thing is their being rare evidence of his indomitable spirit and energies—who, oppressed with business, serial stories and above all the grinding duties of his weekly editing, could sit down to answer seven or eight letters with some of great length, and all overflowing with fun and frolic and vivacity.

Boz was fond in his letters of renewed and yet again renewed allusions to some humorous scene, jest or personage. There are several instances in this series of letters. It was a sort of note of intimacy ; for though the allusion might seem barren and cryptic, it really stood for a world of comic associations that had been again and again laughed over and enriched with fresh ideas and allusions. He thus at every fresh meeting or festival made it more and more entertaining. But in truth " a merrier man, etc." Indeed, those who did not know this agreeable system of his had little idea of their Dickens.

At one time I was acquainted with a troublesome, pushful Divine who "recited," and forced his recitations on such as were too weak to resist. He was chancellor of some small cathedral. He seemed filled with vanity, and was eager to bring himself forward. In the cause of pseudo charity he would furnish personal contributions of this kind to any extent. One day the ever genial Charles had agreed to come and dine with me and " meet a few friends." The Divine got wind of this, and a little before the hour burst in all excitement. " The most fortunate thing in the world ! " he said. " The great man *must* hear me recite, ' The Veneerings '—and my amendments thereto. They are new and all important." " Impossible," I said firmly, " the table 's full." " Then I 'll come in the evening." I positively declined, as Boz, I knew well, detested such exhibitions. The Doctor bowed his head resignedly and went his way. During the dinner I made Boz laugh heartily, telling him of the importuning cleric. "Lord bless you!" he cried in characteristic fashion, "why I should have run out of the room." But when we came upstairs there the Doctor was installed! He must be introduced to Dickens at once, but next moment had introduced himself. "Mr. Dickens, I have made a wonderful improvement in 'The Veneerings,' only a few lines, and I am going to recite them for you now." He went to the other room as if to prepare his stage. But in a flash Boz was gone. I know not how he managed it, but gone he was. I am afraid it is the fact the worthy Doctor always gave out hereafter that he had recited this particular "Veneering" passage before the great Charles Dickens. He had dreamed himself into the belief.

Boz, however, did not escape him. From that moment the Doctor began to plague him with letters, with "little things of his own," and perpetual calls at his door. Boz was dreadfully worried by these things, but he soon found compensation in his favourite entertainment, that is by diverting his friends with this new eccentric figure. To me he scarcely ever wrote a letter without a comic allusion to his persecutor. He called him "the D.D.," or "the Dreadful Doctor." Thus, "The Dreadful Doctor has just left his card." "The Dreadful Doctor is coming to town and will call." "The Dreadful Doctor has left a stout bundle of MS. at the office—a first-rate thing, he says." And so it went on. "The Dreadful Doctor" became known to all his friends. Here was shown in a small way his wonderful power of visualising things; for he really seemed to *create* quite a new character. Even those who had not seen "the Dreadful Doctor" were quite able to enjoy the jests at his expense.

There are a vast number of passages in the printed letters which might be detached as perfect cameos of wit and graphic humour. Though filling three octavos, these letters represent but a minute portion of the vast number that are at large floating about over the world. Many of these came under the eyes of the editors of his works, but could not be used owing to the limited accommodation and other reasons. But the time is approaching when there will be a sure and certain call for these rarities.

I think with pleasure always of his lively and waggish fashion of throwing incidents into grotesque shape, and bringing it before one in dramatic form. Thus speaking of a certain hostility that always raged between Wills and Forster, he would draw a sketch of the pair accidentally meeting in his office and "growling at each other like angry dogs," so that "I had at last to say to Wills, 'Please to withdraw,'" which Wills did. Glaring hostility at the other as he retreated to the door, Wills was heard to mutter, "Never mind, a time will come—all right." I used to hear from each of the two enemies his *private* opinion of the other. "That Wills is neither more nor less than a stock-jobber, and he *has* made money on the Exchange." Wills had an equally disparaging opinion of the other. These things, though they amused, must have been worries.

Forster's foibles were more than compensation, for he literally *revelled* in them—they were so exquisitely original and grotesque, mainly, I believe, owing to the fact that the sage was so impregnably *mailed* in his own self-complacency as to be giving himself away every hour. A Forster story was a joy for ever, and there was a fresh one constantly cropping up. I have seen Boz rolling on a sofa in agonies of enjoyment at some of these tales. Yet who so enjoyed a story as Forster did, or was so grateful for a good one. He had the sense of humour, and could tell one admirably.

A really good story is a handsome, valuable present, for it contributes for a long time at least to your daily enjoyment. But they are rare. Two that I told to Boz he enjoyed with acute pleasure. One was that of the dentist who set up a yacht, which the wags of his acquaintance named the *Tuscarora ;* the other that of a suggested inscription for the monument of an eminent physican in a Dublin cemetery, "Why not put the famous one of Wren's at St. Paul's, 'Si monumentum quæris, circumspice.' "

Again, need I make any excuse for thus exhibiting him in his most engaging moments, enjoying himself in the simplest fashion of "the Simple Life," giving way to his most buoyant feelings, and never on any occasion changing to another mood or humour less accommodating ?

He always took an intense delight in the humours of the stage and in the absurdities, exaggerations and grotesqueness that reigned in his own childish days ; yet, though he laughed at them, he loved them all the time. And who knew them so well ? Everyone "who knows" has revelled in the Crummles scenes at Portsmouth—the most perfect presentment of the country stage life ever given, also the most amusing ; we are lost in admiration at the roundness, the life, the perfect finish and truth of such beings as Folair and Lenville.

There was an old melodrama which he was fond of recalling—*The Miller and His Men.* He dwelt on it with an affectionate interest. I also knew it by heart, every word of it ; he had got it up at school, so had I.

To me it seemed romantic, a drama of absorbing interest. The notion of the robbers posing as harmless, well-floured millers, so as to carry on their dishonest pursuits, was fascinating. Fondly one used to look back to the innocent mill (music by Bishop), the combats, the love business, the comic countryman, the desperate encounters when the bandits were driven to bay and had to throw off the mask. And at the close, when the mill was blown up! I dare affirm that all this and infinitely more was passing through Boz's mind and cherished by him. For he delighted in calling back all his youthful pictures, which seemed to him more dramatic and suggestive than the more brilliant business of actual life. This always seemed to me to furnish a key to his infinitely interesting character. Simple and genuine things—old images, old dreams—were what pleased him. And as in this *Miller and His Men* memory I seemed to have followed his own actual train of thought, he was pleased at this bit of sympathy, and so the subject again and again recurred. In *Household Words* there are numerous allusions to this old play. Papers headed, "The Miller and His Men," "When the wind blows," "Grindoff," "The mill goes," but referring only to those marauders by way of metaphor; just as with those allusions to blacking always recurring in his stories, made because it pleased him to keep before his thoughts that strange and curious secret. This good old crusted piece was produced as far back as 1811, written by a certain Isaac Pocock, but it was revived in 1835, just as Boz was devoting himself to the stage. It was thus that he ever thought fondly of it and cherished all the varied images, quoting with gusto, "More sacks to the mill!" But, indeed, he knew it all by heart, and never failed. The music, how quaint and pleasant it was! "When the wind blows, then the mill goes," by the excellent Bishop.

How ready, too, he was, when some antique, absurd song in which our fathers delighted was quoted, to take up the strain, to answer the cue with corresponding solemnity. As with the "All 's well" chant. The words "All—all 's well!" in slow and sad *thirds*, the two joining in "all 's well!"

It came to pass that one of his own most capable henchmen, "Jack" Hollingshead, had taken Drury Lane Theatre, and conceived a very fantastical scheme for refuting the notion that the old plays were good. This he did by reproducing them under absurd conditions. These foolish exhibitions "Jack" advertised regularly as *Palmy-day Revivals*, an allusion to the constantly quoted "palmy days of the British drama," supposed to be gone for ever, and to which we were supposed to be longing to return. He wished to convince his playgoers that these were but poor ridiculous things. He forgot, however, the indifferent acting, the complete ignorance of the traditions, the total want of sympathy both in actors and audiences. With this view he dug up and degraded all kinds of venerable dramas—*George Barnwell*, *Venice Preserved*, *The Gamester* and the like.

One day while the facetious "Jack" was indulging in these freaks, which proved costly enough for him, I received a joyous letter from Boz, something to this effect: "What do you think? Hollingshead is putting up our good old friend, *The Miller and His Men!* We positively *must* see it. Fix your own night. Do come!" Need I say that I was as pleased as he was and did come?

In his enthusiastic fashion he looked on the resurrection as something quite providential. It was to be a regular "night out." But first—for he was ever hospitable, and thought everything incomplete without *his* hospitality—there must be the prefatory dinner. The old "Albion," then facing Drury Lane Theatre, gone now, was to be the place. How appropriate he thought this tavern for the primitive play! And so we repaired to the "Albion" in the greatest spirits. I see ourselves that night seated in one of the "boxes," or eating pews. Some familiar, semi-Bohemian followers of the old times came up shyly and yet familiarly, to be received by him in his own genial, cordial way. For he never changed to anyone, and he was ever cordial to the humbler fry of his profession, and not only cordial, but hearty and jovial. We then crossed to Drury Lane Theatre, and were duly installed in a good box. The heavy folds of the old green curtain rolled up slowly, and there were seen the millers bending under their burdens, toiling up the steep towards their mill.

How merrily his eye twinkled as he murmured with Grindoff, "More sacks to the mill!" Then came the glee, "When the wind blows, then the mill goes," to Bishop's old-fashioned strains, execrably performed, as, indeed, was the whole. The players and their diction were exaggerated, the old-fashioned spectacles became a burlesque. Alas! the disillusion worked slowly and surely. The whole was stupid, dull, and heavy to a degree, so at last, about the second Act, Boz arose slowly and sadly, and said "he could stand it no longer." I really think he was grieved at having his old idol shattered, and perhaps was mortified.

But presently he rallied. There was the little bachelor haunt, 26 Wellington Street, the office, where there was to be more eating and drinking to wind up the night. We must "drown it in the bowl." This was an extract from a romantic melodrama, *The Castle of Andalusia*, also full of bandits and caves, and which he introduced into the Muggleton dinner, though no one recognised it—

"The glasses sparkle on the board,
The wine is ruby bright."

The Miller and his Men was a portion of Dickens's precious childish memories which he cherished all through his life. When he was at the Wellington House Academy I find he got up this very *Miller and His Men* in a sort of toy theatre. His fellow-pupil, Dr. Danson, tells us how it was given in a very gorgeous form. "Master Beverley constructed the mill for us in such a way that it could tumble to pieces with the assistance of crackers. At one performance the explosion connected with the blowing up of the mill was so loud that the police came knocking at the door." So, forty years later, when the magic name was mentioned these little scenes came back to him—his old school, the mill, his fellow-actors, his management, the explosion—and now here I am, after fifty years more, recalling the talk with him.

On such festive occasions he would abound in delightful stage stories, acted inimitably. Thus he would call up one of those old pantomime scenes where clown and the old pantomime are carrying on their robberies of shops, and clown had secured a leg of mutton which he had put away in his roomy pocket, whence the serious policeman as usual extracted it.

Clown, of course, swears that he never took it, and knew nothing about it. "Nay, nay, Joey," says his friend mildly, "you know you did; I saw you do it." "I tell you I didn't." "Oh, Joey, Joey! you put it in your pocket." "Very well then," says the clown, "*then I'm a liar!*" "No, no, Joey, I don't say that." "Yes, yes, it comes to that, *I'm a liar!*"

Boz said that his argument or *dilemma* always struck him as the most comical alternative—the clown, with his known morals, insisting that it was a reflection upon his character. But it is impossible to give an idea of his humorous play of features as he acted the two fellows.

I ought to be proud of the testimonial in the opening lines of the following letter. During a long life I have never received such a tribute from a relation, friend or acquaintance. It will be noted how he takes the trouble to lay emphasis on what might be taken for a banal compliment.

GAD'S HILL PLACE,
HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER,
KENT,
Tuesday, Sixth November, 1866.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

It is always pleasant to me to hear from you, and I hope you will believe that this is not a mere fashion of speech.

Concerning the Green Covers, I find these leaves to be budding—on unquestionable newspaper authority—but upon my soul I have no other knowledge of their being in embryo! Really, I do not see a chance of my setting myself to such work, until after I shall have accomplished 42 Readings to which I stand pledged.

I hope to begin this series, somewhere about the middle of January, in Dublin. Touching the details of the realization of this hope, will you tell me—in a line as soon as you can—Is the Exhibition Room a good room for speaking in?

P.S.—The Dreadful Doctor has appeared! ! !

Latest Intelligence—
And has sent in his pamphlet on "Puffing."

It will be seen from what follows how confidential he is, and how interesting for the recipient to be told beforehand of the various plans he had in view, and whether public speculation was right or wrong. It is to be suspected few editors thus unfold themselves to their contributors.

It was a delightful and welcome thing for me to be thus allowed to know of his plans, and even of the reasons he had for adopting them. What a privilege too, shared, however, with other friends, that of seeing his writings before publication. Such was the case with some American sketches, not exactly in his best vein. They were "George Silverman," "Holiday Romance" and others. What "the dreadful epithet and description" were I cannot recall now.

GAD'S HILL PLACE,
HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER,
KENT,
Twenty-first July, 1867.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

I am heartily glad to get your letter, and shall be thoroughly well pleased to study you again in the pages of *A.Y.R.* Meantime—and until you come here for a few days—please consider that the dreadful epithet and description are *not* withdrawn, but cleave to you.

I have settled nothing yet about America, but am going to send Dolby out on the 3rd of next month, to survey the land and come back with a report on some heads whereon I require accurate information. Proposals (both from American and English speculators) of a very tempting nature have been repeatedly made to me; but I cannot endure the thought of binding myself to give so many Readings there, whether I like it or no; and, if I go at all, am bent on going with Dolby single-handed.

I have been doing two things for America; one, the little story to which you refer; the other, from little papers for a child's magazine. I like them both, and think the latter rather a queer combination of a child's mind with a grown-up joke. I have had them printed, and to ensure correct printing in the United States. You shall have the proof to read, with the greatest pleasure. On second thoughts, why shouldn't I send you the children's proof? this same post? I will, as I have it here, send it under another cover. When you return it you shall have the short story.

Believe me always,
Heartily yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

PERCY FITZGERALD, ESQUIRE.

I hope you haven't forgotten that the Honourable Charles Townsend vowed that he would have her. She was beautiful.

The allusion to "the Honourable Charles Townshend" referred to a racy story of his own, one of a score almost, with which he regaled me on a long day during a railway journey. It was a story concerning Rogers, the old poet, whom he "took off" with infinite vivacity and dramatic humour, giving the voice, manner and general eccentricities. The voice, he said, he used for Mr. Justice Stareleigh at the Readings. He and a friend went to see the poet, and were received by his faithful valet and *exhibitor*—who knew all his yarns by heart. These Rogers used to repeat almost invariably in the same words. The man presently touched, as it were, one of the stops. "Come, sir, tell Mr. Dickens and his friend the story of the Honourable Miss Townshend and Captain Monckton." Instantly the old man set off in a sort of slow chant, and as if reading from a book, "Colonel Monckton was a dissolute man about town. He had seen the Hon—o—ra—bel Charlotte and desired to win her. She was beautiful. He bri-bed her maid to secrete him in her boudoir, and when she entered to dress, he emerged from his hi-ding place and stood before her. She looked at him fixedly and said, 'Why don't you begin?' *She took him for the 'air dresser.*" It would be difficult to describe the humour and vivaciousness with which the little scene was brought before us.

There is a little passage in one of his letters which seems to me significant as illustrating the view that his kindly sympathies for me were somewhat founded on the consciousness that I seemed to understand the feelings of his early childhood and youth. I had written a little book on *Charles Lamb and Charles Dickens,* coupling them by a sort of affinity, not of proper name merely, but by their common fancy of recalling their childish thoughts, to be carefully cherished and nurtured and blended with their full-grown feelings. I had shown there was a curious parallel in this respect between the two writers. On this he wrote to me with an extraordinary gratitude and enthusiasm, showing that I had touched the chord.

Gad's Hill Place,
Higham by Rochester,
Kent,
Friday, Second February, 1866.

My dear Fitzgerald,

I ought to have written to you days and days ago, to thank you for your charming book on Charles Lamb—to tell you with what interest and pleasure I read it as soon as it came here—and to add that I was honestly affected (far more so than your modesty will readily believe) by your intimate knowledge of those touches of mine concerning childhood.

Let me tell you now that I have not in the least cooled, after all, either as to the graceful sympathetic book, or as to the part in it with which I am honoured. It has become a matter of real feeling with me, and I postponed its expression because I couldn't satisfactorily get it out of myself, and at last I came to the conclusion that it must be left in.

I am, dear Fitzgerald,
Faithfully,
CHARLES DICKENS.

Percy Fitzgerald, Esquire.

The "eminent literary personage," as he used to call me, had now other ambitions—trying his hand at a short dramatic piece. Boz took charge of it, and sent it to his friend Webster.

Thursday, Twelfth September, 1867.

My dear Fitzgerald,

Many thanks for the play enclosed. It goes very glibly and merrily and smoothly, but I make so bold as to say that you can write a much better one. The most characteristic part in it is much too like Compton in the *Unequal Match*. And the best scene in it (where the husband urges his wife to go away), is so excessively dangerous, and is so very near passing a delicate line, that I think the chances would be very many to one against an audience's acceptance of it. Because, however drolly the situation is presented, the fact is not to be got over that that lady seriously supposes her husband to be in league with another man, to hand her over to that other man: both those men being present with her.

Put your sister, mentally, in the situation.

Our friend of The Mimmery,* South Mimms, is married.

My dear Fitzgerald,
Faithfully yours always,
CHARLES DICKENS.

I feel a sore twinge of conscience as I think of this unconscionable tax upon his good nature so cheerfully accepted. He took the play to Mr. Webster, with no result of course, and reported to me the manager's opinion with other details.

The following scraps refer to a story of mine called *Tom Butler* which he rather fancied. "Where, O where, is the rest of Tom Butler?" he used to write.

OFFICE OF "ALL THE YEAR ROUND."
26 WELLINGTON STREET,
STRAND, W.C.,
Thursday, Fourth June, 1868.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

I had done thus much to *Bird's Eye Paris* this morning when I heard from Birtles that you have a Proof of it by you. Will you make your corrections on my enclosed proof, and send it back to Birtles *by return of post?*

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* The Mimmery was a jest that tickled him, referring to the late Poet Laureate, Alfred Austin, who lived at that denomination and at the time struck one as rather an eccentric being; but he soon became *rangè* and important. Such quaint titles Boz enjoyed and played with. I often heard of "The Mimmeries."

Please keep, on abrupt transitions into the present tense, *your critical eye.*

Tom Butler, in type, is just now brought in. I will write to you of him to-morrow or Saturday.

Ever faithfully,
C. D.

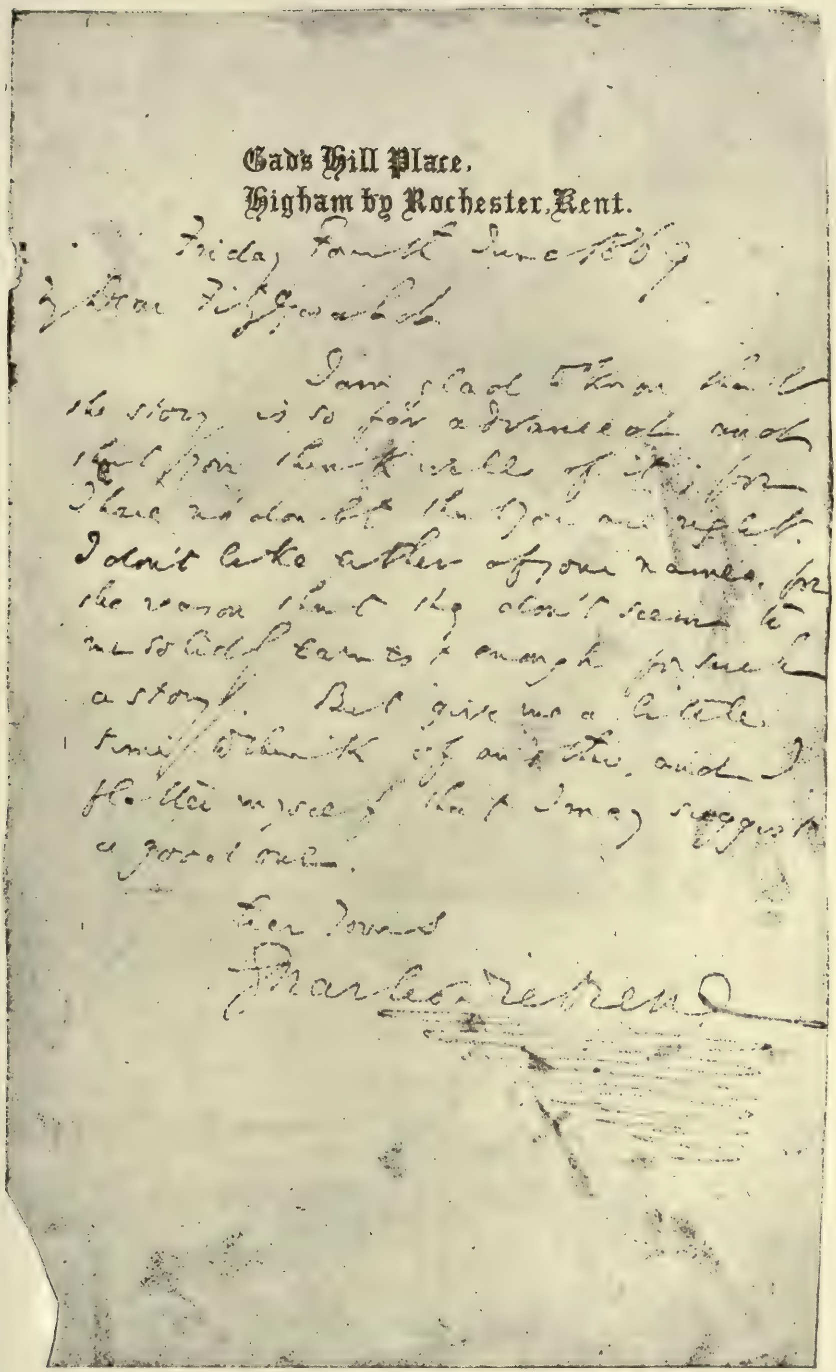
Wills going on well.

And again :—

" *Tom Butler* is in print, and I like him very much. But I do not understand how long you propose to make him. How tall is he to grow, with how many parts is he to expand ? Enlighten me, there's a dear fellow, and I will presently respond. I am glad that you like the children, and am particularly glad that you like the Pirate. I remember very well when I had a general idea of occupying that place in history at the same age. But I loved more desperately than Bold Heart. Enclosed is the American story."

The pleasant ardour with which he followed the course of a story, anticipated its coming, debated its name, and helped its writer over various stiles, and even extricated him from bogs, was all in the same spirit. His aid as to the name and conduct of the story was, it may be conceived, invaluable. Many and earnest were the consultations upon this matter of naming. No one had a nicer ear as to what would " hit " or suit the taste of the town.

" I am glad to hear that the story is so far advanced now that you think well of it, for I have no doubt that you are right. I don't like either of your names, for the reason that they don't seem to me solidly earnest enough for such a story. But give me a little time to think of another, and I flatter myself that I may suggest a good one."



Gad's Hill Place,
Higham by Rochester, Kent.

Friday Fourth June 1869

My dear Fitzgerald

I am glad to know that the story is so far advanced and that you think well of it, for I have no doubt that you are right. I don't like either of your names, for the reason that they don't seem to me solidly earnest enough for such a story. But give me a little time to think of another, and I flatter myself that I may suggest a good one.

Ever Yours

Charles Dickens

FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM CHARLES DICKENS TO PERCY FITZGERALD.

And again of a later story:—

"I think the plan of the story very promising, and suggestive of a remarkably good, new, and strong interest. What do you think of the pursuing relative dying at last *of the same disorder as the baronet's daughter*, and under such circumstances as to make out the case of the clergyman's daughter and clear up the story? As, for example, *suppose her husband himself does almost the same thing in going for help when the man is dying.* I think I see a fine story here. As to the name. No, certainly not. 'What could She do?' No again. 'What will He do with It?' 'Can He forgive Her?' 'Put yourself in His Place.' Remember these titles."

GAD'S HILL PLACE,
HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER,
KENT,
Thursday, Fifth November, 1868.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

Pray don't suppose that *Tom Butler* is in disgrace, because that is not the fact. I think I must reserve him for the New Series in consequence of the immense difficulty I find in clearing off articles in type. It is immensely greater than I had supposed or allowed for.

Ever faithfully,
CHARLES DICKENS.

Who could conceive of a modern editor troubling himself about a *Tom Butler* in any conceivable shape or form—caring whether he was "in disgrace," or overlooked, or held over, or seeming as if to apologise for non-appearance?

Nothing was more delightful than his little theories of daily life and talk, always cropping up, which were most quaint and amusing. None were so often illustrated and emphasised as that two perfect strangers were certain to find some common link. It was delightful to see his enjoyment when he would cry out, "There, again! You both know something about a third person, you see." Once at Gad's Hill there was George Moore, the philanthropist, dining, and I had just arrived and reported that the only election news about town was that a quasi-merchant, a certain Pim, a Quaker, had got in for Dublin. Moore was enchanted. "The best customer I have, and an admirable fellow. I 'm really delighted." So was Boz. "There, d 'ye hear?" he cried, "another instance, you see! You two have never met before, and meet here by mere accident, and, lo! there you are both connected at once by a common link—what I am always saying, the world is so small."

Another of these little hobbies was this, of a rather tragic cast. "So many hundreds are killed in the London streets every year. Now here is November, and yet the number is not completed, nor near it, and the statistical folk say a hundred or so will *have to be killed* by the last day of December!" A quaintly original but tragical notion.

It would be difficult to find a more attractive girl than "Mamie" Dickens, so she was called—Mary was her formal name. Decidedly pretty she was, but her power lay in her interesting character—its curious spirit of *independence* and haughty refusal of submission, which made one think that some Petruchio might arrive and confront this imperious being. From this spirit of hers I confess I suffered a good deal, as she never spared me. Many a hard knock I received. At one moment I was in favour, presently quite out of it. Still, there was something rather piquant in carrying on this mimic struggle, and I was always thinking of her as the poet's heroine :

> " Thou hast so many pleasing, teasing ways about thee,
> There is no living with thee or without thee."

She was of *petite* figure, small, well-shaped features, and, as I have said, had a ready wit. There was a family she often visited, whom I affected to depreciate, without knowing anything about them, a matter which she resented seriously. And we had many a quarrel on these matters. Later on we became friends, and I won back her favour by writing and printing an ode to her little dog Bouncer.

CHAPTER IV

THE READING TOURS. A PLEASANT COMEDY SCENE. HIS INDULGENT TOLERATION OF THE AUTHOR AND HIS GENTLE REBUKES. "THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE."

Once he had set forth on his very trying pilgrimage of reading tours, Dickens jealously guarded himself from all intrusion of hospitalities and such complimentary tributes, carefully "fending off," as it were, all considerate attentions however well meant. From this system, absolutely necessary for his repose, he scarcely ever departed, except perhaps in a single instance, that of myself. I believe I was the only one from whom he accepted a formal dinner to meet other guests. I also was the only one whom he took round with him on his tours from town to town, and I well recall the kindly enjoyment with which he planned out a more extended tour all through the Scottish cities. A special saloon carriage for his exclusive use was allotted to him by the companies. Anything like a *planned* expedition pleased, and he liked working out the details. The pleasant prospect, however, faded out owing to difficulties on my side—family and other matters. Nor was I altogether sorry to escape the risk of failure in keeping up to the standard he had formed of my companionship. It would have been mortifying to discover that he had, as it were, made a mistake and cumbered himself with one who was not exactly up to his estimate. Here were rare privileges and happy opportunities.

The disastrous course of the "Readings"—his heroic devotion which really cost him his life—was at last drawing to a close, and it was now my happy privilege to be his fellow traveller and companion on the Irish expedition. The following letter has a bearing on the matter:—

Office of "All The Year Round."
No. 26 Wellington Street,
Strand,
London, W.C.,
Monday, Eighteenth May, 1868.

My dear Fitzgerald,

Wills is ordered away for positive rest and change, and is forbidden even to write a letter. The Paris paper is welcome, and Theodore of Corsica shall receive unbounded hospitality in these Halls. I am ready for him as soon as he likes.

Regarding the Readings, thus the case stands: I mean to take my farewell of that occupation in the ensuing winter and spring. Dublin and Belfast will assuredly be in the programme, and I shall not fail to claim your promise to join the pilgrimage. Dolby begs me to tell you that he is full of joyful anticipation. He has been utterly hardened by his American bullying, and has none but private feelings left.

Many thanks for your kind welcome home.

Always cordially yours,
CHARLES DICKENS.

Percy Fitzgerald, Esquire.

It is pleasant to tell this. All the time he was in the most buoyant spirits, and one morning we sat from breakfast time to two o'clock whilst he, in his most humorous mood, was pouring out a stream of diverting stories with the richest effect.

It was at Dublin that I first met Dolby, and then I began to see what a useful agent he was in dealing with crowds and working up a sensation; for he was—as he ought to have been—wonderfully thick-skinned. He minded nothing, felt nothing, he would see anyone, say anything, or do anything. He tells in his amusing book of a gentleman who came into the pretty "Round Room" of the Rotunda, where the readings were given, and who had some difficulty in finding his seat; when someone in the gallery shouted, "Ah, Misther Fitzjare, can't ye seat yerself down quietly?" This gentleman was myself. Boz had not "come on," otherwise I should never have ceased hearing of this jest. He would have revelled in it. When we started for Belfast I found Boz already seated in his carriage, though it was a full quarter before the time of departure. He never could understand or tolerate leaving a small margin, or "running it close." Dolby, meanwhile, was in a state of excitement about the violet screen and other properties, which the station-master refused to admit into the van without payment. Dolby explained to him that they had never been charged at any station in the kingdom. Did he know that this was Mr. Dickens? The fellow answered that he did not care a d—— whether it was Mr. Dickens or anybody else; the things should not go unless paid for. Dickens laughed heartily at this rebuff, but Dolby fumed and raged all the way down.

At Belfast we put up at the old-fashioned Royal Hotel in Donegal Street, where the ladies used to contrive to be always passing before the door of the illustrious guest. It was a most pleasant time, for Boz, under all this weight of business, was ever cheery and like a schoolboy. We went to the Ulster Hall, a vast place, to look at it and try it, and I remember climbing to the far-off gallery to report how his voice "carried." Then we walked about and saw the town. It was rather a trying business to "walk about" with Boz, for everybody stared hard at the remarkable face and figure.

After dinner that night, which was as gay as possible, we sallied forth to the local theatre. Dickens was a little apprehensive lest the manager or his people would insist on honouring him as a brother of the profession, but he escaped their notice. After the reading we had a supper, and then Dolby "came out." I could see that he amused Boz by his rough manner of speech. He was assiduous in gathering up local stories, incidents, etc., to amuse "the Chief," as he invariably called him, and these the Chief seriously inclined to hear. Nay, after supper, as Boz reclined on the sofa, Dolby went through various gymnastics, notably the feat of standing on his head on a chair, in which he was not very successful; but the eager Boz was piqued into competing, all wearied as he was, and thought he would show him how to do it—and he actually did!

When we were leaving Belfast there was a grotesque scene, which amused Dickens mightily. A portly, smug-faced man was seen smiling rather complacently on Boz, as who should say, "I approve of you. I am sure we shall like each other." He then spoke to the stationmaster, who came up, and said that was Mr. ——, the eminent flax-spinner, who would be gratified to have the pleasure of travelling to town with Mr. Dickens. I could see that the impressed bystanders thought that the consent was a matter of course, and that it was rather a fitting attention on the part of the flax-spinner, who stood still smiling. But I did not like to look at his face when the stationmaster told him that Mr. Dickens was very sorry, but *preferred* to travel with his own party. Boz was, however, much amused.

But there was no laughing in what followed. The company had, by way of compliment, given our author a coupé carriage (next to the engine), which gave a view of the whole country—an antiquated style of vehicle rarely seen now. After an hour's travel there came a violent grinding, and the air was filled with dust and steam, and the train was sharply brought to a stop. Dickens was greatly alarmed, for his nerves had been sadly shaken by the recent Staplehurst accident. I recollect noticing the same nervous trouble on our return from the great day at Knebworth, which I have already described, when there was a shock and stoppage of the train. On this journey from Belfast we were all in real peril, and escaped as by a miracle. Getting down, as all the passengers did, Boz was presently in talk with the engine driver, who explained that "her great drivin' wheel" had burst into fragments; one block struck the coupé just above our heads—a little lower, and it would have taken us all, in a row, himself, myself, his amiable sister-in-law, and Dolby. That night we spent at the pleasant Shelburne hotel that looks out on St. Stephen's Green, where I believe they still point out his rooms. Boz good-naturedly insisted that, as we had been travellers, we must not part before winding up in true jolly fashion. Abundant in stories and jests I was taking my way home to my own house hoping to see him again in a day or two, and feeling, in the Bard's phrase, that "I had bestowed sufficient of my tediousness on him." "Come," he said, "we must have one last dinner at the Shelburne Hotel." I protested. He was tired after his journey. I would tire him more, and so on. "Not a bit—not—one—bit. Come now, you will?" And I did come, adding another happy evening to the rest. I fancy to be "talking shop," as it is called, with the rather prosaic Dolby *would* have tired him.

After the death of Dickens I used occasionally to encounter Dolby, who began to fall on evil days. He had made a good connection, and was brother of the cantatrice, but somehow he did not get forward. I noticed the growing shabbiness. He came to me when he had written his book, and asked me to try and get him a publisher. I gave him a letter or two. Poor Dolby! Had I known of his last straits, I should have been glad indeed to have helped him.

The tragic episode of Nancy's murder by Sikes in "Oliver Twist" Boz had persuaded himself was one of his powerful and effective efforts for the Readings. But this was not the general opinion. It was a gruesome thing enough, but somewhat overstrained and melodramatic in spite of the old Macready's murmured verdict, "Two Macbeths! Two Macbeths!" a flattering criticism which he repeated to me with pardonable pleasure. The Dublin audience showed little appreciation, and indeed seemed scarcely to understand. I had tried to make some excuses for them, on which he good-naturedly wrote to me.

Belfast,
Friday, Fifteenth January, 1869.

My dear Fitzgerald,

It was very considerate and thoughtful in you to write to me, and I have been much gratified by your note. It is extraordinarily difficult to understand (from the point of action) an audience that does not express itself, and I certainly mistook mine on Wednesday night. When the murder was done in London, the people were frozen while it went on, but came to life when it was over and rose to boiling-point. I have now told Dolby that henceforth it must be set apart from all our other effects, and judged by no other "Reading" standard.

We all unite in kindest regards and remembrance to your mother and sisters, and I am ever,

Your affectionate friend,
CHARLES DICKENS.

Naturally I was often pressed by friends to introduce "little things of their own" to the eminent writer. These I almost invariably put aside, with the result that I gave offence, save in a special instance or so. Such was that of the excellent and amiable "Ulster."

Kennedy's Hotel,
Edinburgh,
Saturday, Twelfth December, 1868.

My dear Fitzgerald,

I do not quite understand from your kind note (forwarded here this morning) whether Sir Bernard Burke proposes to write those papers, or whether he suggests them to you. In either case I shall be delighted to have them for *All The Year Round.* It is necessary that they should appear under separate headings, each with its own title, as we have already three running titles.

Fatal Zero is going on famously, and I think will make a hit. I had a letter from Wilkie Collins yesterday, much interested in perceiving your scheme and in following your working of it out.

We purpose being in Dublin on Thursday, 7th January, and going on to Belfast that afternoon. I hope we shall find you in readiness to go along with us. We are working away here and at Glasgow, but must be in London on the 22nd for a Christmas reading of the *Carol* there.

"We" means Dolby and I. He sends you his kindest regards.

Ever, my dear Fitzgerald,
Faithfully yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

It will be seen from the following that his always favoured contributor was welcome, whether he came with a short or a long story or with both at once. I cannot bring myself to bate by one jot the record of these things.

OFFICE OF "ALL THE YEAR ROUND,"
26 WELLINGTON STREET,
STRAND, W.C.,
Monday, Third May, 1869.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

I answer your letter to Charley myself.

It is perfectly understood between us, that you write the long serial story next after Mrs. Trollope's. That is a positive engagement.

When I told Charley to write to you respecting a shorter story meanwhile, I meant that to be quite apart from, and over and above, the aforesaid long one. May I look at the chapters you speak of, on decoration ?

I am in a brilliant condition, thank God. Rest and a little care immediately *unshook* the railway shaking.

Faithfully yours ever,
CHARLES DICKENS.

It would be difficult to imagine the modern editor humbly entreating forgiveness for not inserting a trivial paper.

MANCHESTER,
Sunday, Seventh March, 1869.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

I had a business letter of reference from your landlord, Mr. Inderwick, at Birmingham yesterday, and immediately replied to the same.

Don't hate me—more than you can help—when I say that I have been reading the Sixpenny Shakespeare, and that I don't see it. I don't think the joke is worth the great ingenuity expended on it, and I don't think the public would take it. *Wills and Will Making* most excellent. I have placed it—in two parts—already. It is capital.

Once again don't hate me more than you can help, and Your Petitioner will ever pray (I don't know what Petitioners pray for).

Ever yours,
C. D.

Often—and not merely in stories written for him—would I find myself in some "tangle" of plot or situations. And here, as a matter of course, I would turn for aid to my kind friend. "Come up," he would say, "and we will have it all out together." And so we had, with sure relief and success.

How pleasantly gay and humorous is this little scrap on the occasion of my marriage:—

Office of "All The Year Round,"
26 Wellington Street,
Strand, W.C.,
Thursday, Sixteenth September, 1869.

My dear Fitzgerald,

I enclose a cheque for £50. Will you kindly advise Holdsworth of its safe receipt?

"The little victims play"

—with ready money—always under those circumstances, I am told!

Ever your Venerable Sage,
CHARLES DICKENS.

Once he cheerfully agreed to come to a little experimental dinner at our house, and which must have amused him from some unexpected and awkward interruptions, owing to "unrehearsed service," such as the slow descent of a flood of water down the stairs from the upper portion, a careless servant having left the cocks all turned! I noted the merry twinkle in his eye struggling with sympathy—and "The little victims play," a favourite quotation of his, almost on his lips. The little dame of the house, quite new to the business, was, as I often pointed out to him, a strange suggestion of his own Dora, and had the same piquant and pretty inexperience. She resembled a Sèvres china figure—and had an armoury of charming ways. And here was her first official performance—a rash one, as our "establishment," so called, was indifferently mounted as to servants.

On this occasion there was a delightful bit of comedy, "acted" by our genial guest. I see him, in the finest spirits, standing at the fireplace just before dinner. He pulled a letter out of his pocket, "What *can* be coming over Forster? He is getting inconceivable, incomprehensible. I have just had this from him. What *does* he mean?" He put on his glasses and began to read: "I am sorry I can't be with you at F.'s to-night. But, sir, mark you this, no trespassing on my preserves; at your peril do so! *Remember, sir, Codlin's the friend, not Short.*" With a bewildered look repeated Boz, "What *does* he mean? Codlin's the friend, not Short." Then to me, "Have you any idea?" I *had*, and so had the pretty little hostess, who was simpering and bridling in a very interesting way. The fact was, Forster, in his robust style, always affected to be quite enslaved by the newest charmer, and assumed that everyone ought to know it. Dickens could not, or, I suspect, *would* not, understand. "I think he is a little mad," he said at last. Forster was indeed an inexhaustible subject of delight to him—ever fresh, new and varied, and yet his enjoyment was all the time consistent with their long friendship.

The following shows the gentle, apologetic method of explanation when he had to delay or put off.

OFFICE OF "ALL THE YEAR ROUND,"
26 WELLINGTON STREET,
STRAND, W.C.,
Saturday, Thirteenth October, 1869.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

Make yourself quite easy. There is not the slightest need for hurry, and you can take your own time. I have a story in 2 parts still to place in Nos. not yet made up.

Until Wednesday and always,

Faithfully yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

That "and always" is for me a touching variation of the familiar formula.

What average editor, it may be said, feels called upon to make an excuse for missing a contributor at the office when he calls?

GAD'S HILL PLACE,
HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER,
KENT,
Sunday, Seventeenth October, 1869.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

I have been unfortunate in missing you at the office. It is at once amusing and amazing to me to find you speculating whether your new state of life has anything to do with it!!! I am at work upon a new book, and have had occasional glimpses of a holiday, but have been there regularly to work—for all that—though not to sleep or stay.

I shall be there again on Thursday. In the meantime you shall have what is printed of *The Bridge of Sighs*, to abbreviate according to your knowledge of the story.

In haste,

Ever affectionately yours,

C. D.

Having had a large experience of all sorts and conditions of editors—their ways, humours, testimony, indifference, etc. I am enabled to contrast them with this super-editor of them all for kindliness, patience, humility, and display of fine restraint. It will seem incredible if I say that without an exception he never sent me back a paper without filling a page or so with good-natured excuses and apologies, as if begging pardon for being so free. Sometimes he would lay the blame on himself for not understanding. Here is a favourite pattern :—

OFFICE OF "ALL THE YEAR ROUND."
No. 26 WELLINGTON STREET,
STRAND, LONDON, W.C.,
Thursday, Eleventh November, 1869.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

I am afraid the monkey is anticipated. It has been exceedingly well done by G. Buckland in *Land and Water*, and would be a day after the Fair. I was going to place him to-day, but in the meantime caught sight of Buckland's paper, which has been extensively copied in weekly and country journals.

Ever faithfully,
C. D.

I may confess—and do confess with pleasure to anything that gave him enjoyment, though at my expense—that there was much foundation for the waggish allusions in various letters as to my unreadiness or uncertainty, or indeed what is commonly termed "taking things easy." Nothing did he enjoy more than some little failings of this kind in one of his friends, and upon them he played in his own delightful way. Can I ever forget the inexpressibly roguish glance of the brilliant eye as he detected the first symptom of a hesitation or uncertainty in accepting his affectionate and repeated invitations?

I cannot forget the intense relish and huge enjoyment of Boz, who used to roar over one jest: "You have done," he would say, "what no living man has done—introduced a new term (namely "The Random") into the 'Chapel.' And they have quite adopted it too! Wonderful fellow! They wouldn't do it for me, I assure you." Then he would go on playing with it, putting it in the most humorous and truly comical lights. "You must know, Birtles was with me this morning, and said gravely: 'I have brought some more of Mr. Percy Fitzgerald's *Randoms.*' Ha, ha, ha! A capital name too, *Randoms!* I congratulate you." It was indeed delightful to hear him, his enjoyment was so thorough. It was like Dr. Johnson roaring and chuckling all down Fleet Street.

In one letter—written only a few weeks before his death—I find some of this playful "rallying" of me, which he enjoyed, on the score of typographical confusion,—which I fear was rather a failing of mine. These brought serious troubles and inconvenience to printers and others, but how gently and patiently did he treat them. The "fraudulent butler" was his name for the old persecutor, Richard Bentley, of Burlington Street. He often humorously declared to me that this old publisher always exactly presented that image to him. There was much truth in the description.*

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* It is wonderful, by the way, as I read of Boz's early battlings with his publishers, to think that I should have known, and known well, this "fraudulent butler," the first publisher of *Oliver Twist.* To me he was the friendliest of men, a generous encourager, while his spirited faith in my first novel, *Bella Donna,* written for him, led Boz to invite me to furnish him with a series of novels.

OFFICE OF "ALL THE YEAR ROUND,"
26 WELLINGTON STREET,
STRAND, W.C.,
Thursday, Nineteenth August, 1869.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

My difficulty about your story has been a report from Birtles that "the copy of some part of another story had got mixed with it, and it was impossible to make sense." You were then just married and gone. I waited until you should have leisure. Now that I hear from you, I tell you only I have waited, and ask :—"*Is* the story made straight, and *is* it at the Printer's ?" Reply, reply, reply, as Bishop's Duet says. Reply also to this :—How long is it ?

An Experience is, according to my thinking, one of the most remarkable pieces I ever saw.

The Authoress of *Veronique* (Marryatt's daughter) really had hit upon that title before Mrs. Trollope chose *Veronica.* The fraudulent butler, you see, wouldn't change it : because he gets it advertised at our expense. Such are the wiles of fraudulent butlers in general !

I hope that Mrs. Fitzgerald has wrought miracles in the way of diabolically direct and persistent decision on the part of an eminent literary personage. It will be the crowning triumph and glory of the great Institution of Matrimony !

You ask me about Wills and Will-making. I think the Soane case altogether too grimly dismal—and too recent for revival. With the Berkeley Family I will have nothing editorial to do, "in possession, reversion, remainder, or expectancy." Another case better not raked up, until years shall have softened it.

My dear Fitzgerald,
Ever faithfully yours,
CHARLES DICKENS.

But a sort of crisis was now approaching. Here was a gentle but humorous warning which I fear was unheeded.

> OFFICE OF "ALL THE YEAR ROUND,"
> 26 WELLINGTON ST.,
> STRAND, W.C.,
> *Thursday, Eighteenth November*, 1869.
>
> MY DEAR FITZGERALD,
>
> For my sake—if not for Heaven's—do, I *entreat you*, look over your manuscript before sending it to the printer. Its condition involves us all in hopeless confusion, and really occasions a great unnecessary cost. I was going to place the enclosed article just now, but found it really impossible to deal with, having regard to the other business to be done.
>
> Ever faithfully,
> C. D.

How tolerant was this. A modern editor would be utterly unceremonious—"would stand no nonsense," "return the copy," and so on. There is something almost pathetic in this appeal—for such it is—no reproof, no chidings, but "I entreat you," "for my sake" to carry out *his* business with regularity, and in decent order!

At last, however, his patience gave way, and on one occasion he had to give me a serious rebuke, which I must say was richly deserved. I know that I am "giving myself away," as it is called, by making these frank confessions; but I am indemnified for such humiliation by supplying fresh testimony to his generous and indulgent kindness. But coming from *him* it was indeed severe.

Office of "All The Year Round,"
26 Wellington Street,
Strand, W.C.,
Wednesday, Ninth March, 1870.

My dear Fitzgerald,

You make me very uneasy on the subject of your new long story here, and by sowing your name broadcast in so many fields at once, and undertaking such an impossible amount of fiction at one time. Just as you are coming on with us you have another serial in progress in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, and another announced in *Once a Week*, and so far as I know the art we both profess, it cannot be reasonably pursued in this way. I think the short story you are now finishing in these pages obviously marked by traces of great haste and small consideration, and a long story similarly blemished would really do the publication irreparable harm.

These considerations are so much upon my mind that I cannot forbear representing them to you, in the hope that they may induce you to take a little more into account the necessity of care and preparation, and some self-denial in respect of the quantity done.

I am quite sure that I write fully as much in your interest as in that of *All the Year Round.*

Believe me,
Always faithfully yours,
CHARLES DICKENS.

I have often turned back to this rebuke, given over forty years ago, only three months before his death. I can see that it pained him to give it; but the interests of the journal were in peril, and he had to be cruel to be kind. "I cannot forbear representing" these remonstrances. This was gentle indeed.

So with eyes at last opened to my folly, I wrote to him a sincerely genuine and wholly penitent letter. It received a most kind and generous response, and I was forgiven at once.

5 HYDE PARK PLACE, W.,
Friday, Eleventh March, 1870.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

Of course the engagement between us is to continue, and I am sure you know me too well to suppose that I have ever had a thought to the contrary. Your explanation is (as it naturally would be, being yours) manly and honest, and I am both satisfied and hopeful.

Ever yours,
CHARLES DICKENS.

In connection with these gentle reproofs, I find in an old irregular diary this scrap: "Mrs. Forster telling me to-day his dining with them: of his liking for me: of his saying, 'He can do anything if he only gave himself fair play.' He then recounted to them how he had written to me a regualar 'blowing up,' as he called it, which he said 'he would not take from anyone else. He is a good fellow.' He then was pleased to expatiate on the last scene in a story I had written, called *Seventy-five Brooke Street:* 'The finest and most powerful thing. If I didn't know the man I would certainly have made him out.'" Here is a prodigious piece of egotism, it will be said; "what lack of taste to report these things;" but I am too proud of the testimonial from such a man to be silent in the matter. It was the always amiable Mrs. Forster who reported the talk to me, knowing that it would give intense pleasure.

We were now preparing for the issue of a novel by myself, in the shape of the then invariable three volumes, or "three decker," as it was called. This *format* the libraries insisted as furnishing more profit, the work, if popular, being given out volume by volume. The system has long since given place to the single volume. We had many councils on the subject, its treatment and title. At devising the latter Boz was wonderfully suggestive.

The following note relates to the new book:—

5 HYDE PARK PLACE, W.,
Monday, Twenty-eighth March, 1870.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

I am very sorry I was not at home.

It gives me the greatest pleasure to receive such good tidings of the new story, and I shall enter on its perusal in proof with the brightest appreciation. Will you send as much of it as you can spare to the office.

With kindest regard to Mrs. Fitzgerald.

Ever faithfully yours,
CHARLES DICKENS.

With reference to the title of the book he wrote me:—

5 HYDE PARK PLACE, W.,
Monday, Fourth April, 1870.

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

It strikes me that a quaintly expressive title for such a book would be:

The Doctor's Mixture.

What do you think of it?

Ever faithfully,
C. D.

This selection of a title was made but a few weeks before his death, but it struck me as being not exactly "quaintly expressive." For the story turned upon a country doctor, who had two charming daughters, whom it was the object of his life to "marry off" advantageously. They were set forth as highly attractive. Now it was plain that to describe them as though they were one of his own medicine bottles left a disagreeable impression. However, I would not for the world object. But later the publisher, when it came to appear in the three volumes, summarily abolished the title against my wish, and substituted *Two Fair Daughters.*

I little dreamed at the time that this was to be the last of these agreeable united efforts of ours, and that almost with the appearance of the first chapter his bright lamp was to go out.

CHAPTER V

CLOSING SCENES. THE DINNER PARTY AND CONCERT. HIS LAST DESPONDING LETTERS AND DEATH.

I CAN recall the fitful flurry and excitement of the day before his setting out on his disastrous expedition to the United States. The scene, as it appears to me now, some fifty years away, was one long and agitated one, going on all the day in the little cribbed and cabined office in Wellington Street. Here people were arriving at every moment, imperative to see him; and I would squeeze past them in the narrow stair several times in the day. The central figure was the worn, well frayed man, now looking at a letter brought in hastily, now engaged with some business man; and yet he could find time to talk to me. Firstly, as he insisted, I *must* come with him on the farewell party down to Liverpool, stay with him at the Adelphi Hotel, and have a pleasant night. Then he had been interested about a *Life of Garrick* I was getting ready. Could I do this for him—get him the sheets (it was then in the press)—it would amuse him in his cabin? As to the anticipated entertainment and solace, that was doubtful enough. In the flurry, and once more, I think, on the dark "squeezed" stair, I gave him a trifling souvenir—a sealskin cigar case—which he good-naturedly said was "just the thing he was wanting." I flew to the printing-house, where I found they were only too flattered at such a commission, and hurriedly "took off" a special set of the proofs.

As for the farewell expedition to Liverpool, for some reason I was unable to go; but I fancy it must have been a melancholy business. The poor victim must have had a weight of anxiety on him, with a feeling of uncertainty.

One of my last communications with our amiable "chief" was still destined to be associated with his old haunt, the little office in Wellington Street—the old familiar workshop, whither for over fifteen years I had been visiting. These visits later were connected with a story, into the scheme of which he entered readily. Indeed, I never dreamed when I gave him a sketch of it that he would wish to have it. I see him now—it was in the last weeks—the worn, buffeted face, the strained eyes, peering through the gold-rimmed glasses, always of strong power; the face bent down to the manuscript which lay on the table, and which he stooped to turn over. The writing was not of the clearest—these were the far-off *pre-typewriting* days—and I recall his half sigh as he gave up the difficult task. But he would have it.

Such scenes as this are vividly imprinted on my memory, long ago as it is; and trifling as they are, they seem to me the only records of the kind that we have, showing him as he was in his literary life and work.

In the year of his death he had taken a house for the season—Milner Gibson's—near the Marble Arch, where I remember about his first act was to give me and my pretty partner a "wedding dinner." There was a large party, one of whom was a gay, agreeable man well known about town, who a year or two later "came to grief," with other notables. On going into the drawing-room, the host took me aside, and said, "There is a young artist here whom I would ask you to be attentive to. He is the one I have chosen to illustrate the new book." And he introduced me to the present Sir Luke Fildes, then very young, but of very high promise—" strongly recommended by Millais," he said.

On this occasion I found myself next to Sir Edwin Landseer, then, like his host, almost close on his term. The house had been, it is well known, associated with Mr. Home's feats, and an amusing discussion arose between the host and the painter, who had witnessed some of them. Nay, it was affirmed that on the drawing-room ceiling there was still to be seen the medium's signature in pencil, written while he was aloft floating in the air. Sir Edwin was an agreeable neighbour. Not very long before he had gone to an artist, of whom I knew something, and who also painted animals. Noticing the lumps of paint—" scrapings " of the palette—on a piece of board, he took it up, and carelessly, but with art, worked all into a spirited dog's head. It was pleasing to hear the two old friends jesting with each other across the table.

Later on he gave a concert, a more ambitious effort, and a very interesting thing indeed it was to see his rooms filled with a mixture of the town elements—artistic, literary, and fashionable. His friend Joachim came to play for him, with also various singers of eminence, gratified to give him that proof of their regard. There were Santley, Hallé, Cummings, and the Glee Union. So the music was admirable. He himself was in good spirits, though not looking well; but he was ever genial, doing his host-duties everywhere with animation, taking ladies up and down to supper.

I recall a pretty scene in the course of the night. A little lady who all agreed was a *replica* of "Dora" in *Copperfield*, and could prattle in the most engaging manner, encountered our host in the crush, and stopped him: "Now, Mr. Dickens, I have been here the whole night and you have never come near me. Most unkind of you." "*Do* you think so," he cried, with a sort of boisterous earnestness. "Then let us go down to supper, and there we will make-up." And off she sailed in triumph.

"I have delayed," he wrote to her two days after his own party, "answering your kind note on the chance of discovering some loophole in my engagements for to-night. But I am sorry to say that I have got into a complicated state of engagements. This almost always happens in the last month of my term or stay in town, but this year it is worse than ever. Pray accept a dismal absentee's best wishes for a great success to-night, and give Percy my kindest regards. To crown my distresses, I write with a steel pen (which I can never use), closely hemmed in on each side" (he was writing from a club) "by a talkative person of disagreeable opinions."

Indeed, at this time he knew not what was impending; and yet, as was indeed to be expected with a man of his position, he was pursued with invitations to dinners and parties.

Every letter he contrived to make pleasant by some little stroke or picture in his own manner. Within a few days he was again writing, from his favourite country place:

> "I have been obliged to fly for a time from the dinings and other engagements of this London season, and to take refuge here to get myself into my usual gymnastic condition, where I am looking forward to

the pleasure of welcoming you and F—— to this pretty country. I have been subject for a few years past to a neuralgic attack in the foot, originating in over-walking in deep snow, and revived by a hard winter in America. For the last three weeks it has made me dead-lame, and it now obliges me to beg absolution from all the social engagements I had made. Deprivation of my usual walks is a very serious matter to me, as I cannot work unless I have my constant exercise. Your kind note, therefore, finds me helpless and moody, but virtuously virtuous. I shall hope to be vicious again soon, and to report myself to you as a good example of dissipation and free living, until when and always, yours," etc.

Here was the last of these cheery, ever-interesting letters, full of his never-failing good nature.

The preceding one referred to some private theatricals we were giving, for which I had written a light comedy with a part specially designed for his daughter Mamie. He good-naturedly interested himself in the plan, read it, and studied, and criticised; but for some reason, now forgotten, the scheme was not carried out.*

I fancy he thought the part did not suit her.

It was now come to June, 1870. He encouraged me with praise of my new serial, "The Doctor's Mixture," had read what had been written, and thought it would do well. It was to open the volume on Saturday, June the Fourth, and on that day it made its appearance. By the following Thursday, the fatal ninth, he was gone! The fourth to the seventh chapters must have been the last he had "made up" for publication. They appeared on June 11th. It gave one a thrill to read in the isssue for June 18th, some eight days after his death, this announcement of his story:—

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* The general wonder was the attendance of the great recluse, my faithful patron, Sir E. Lytton Bulwer, seen in a conspicuous stall listening with patience to our amateur exertions.

> "MR. DICKENS' NEW WORK.
> JUST PUBLISHED, PRICE ONE SHILLING.
> PART THREE OF
> 'THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD.'
> *To be completed in twelve monthly numbers.*"

I recall in these closing days a dramatic entertainment given by Lady Freake, a well-known personage of some fashion, where was assembled a large company to witness a dramatic performance in which his daughters, Miss Dickens and Mrs. Charles Collins, took part. The pieces were got up with extraordinary pains, the first being a French one, *The Prima Donna*, with a blind girl as heroine. The scenery was arranged and designed by Mr. Millais, as he was then.

CROMWELL HOUSE.
Thursday, June 2, 1870.

"A HAPPY PAIR."
CHARACTERS.

Mr. Honeyton	MR. AUGUSTUS SALDING
Mrs. Honeyton	MISS HARRIET YOUNG

"PRIMA DONNA."
CHARACTERS.

Dr. Holbein	MR. HASTINGS HUGHES
Eric	MR. CRAWFORD GROVE
Rouble	MR. HERMAN MERIVALE
Stella	MISS DICKENS
Alice	MRS. CHARLES COLLINS

"LE MYOSOTIS."
Bouffonerie.

Corbillon (Empailleur)	MR. HAROLD POWER
Schuitzberg (Violoncelliste)	MR. ALFRED THOMPSON

The acting of the two ladies was exceedingly touching and clever—as was indeed to be expected with so skilled and painstaking an instructor, who had taken enormous pains. He was behind the scenes the whole time. I had just one glimpse of a well-worn, all but haggard face, flitting by, and this was to be my last vision of that noble, ever amiable man. He got home as speedily as he could, and away to the country to the soft restoring breezes of his loved Kentish home. That night of the play was Thursday. On the following Thursday he was seized with the last fatal attack.

I find these abrupt entries in a Diary :—

June 9th, 1870, *at* 6 *p.m.*

Died dear Charles Dickens ! I think at this moment of his dear genial manner—never changing—so cordial and hearty, the delightful days at Belfast, the travelling in the trains, the evenings at the hotel, he lying on the sofa and listening to my stories. Even the last time that I saw him, which was in Wellington Street some four weeks ago, about our plays, when we talked of them, and he complained so sadly of the going out of the dinners, and his regrets that he could not be with *us* and our party. However he *would* come in afterwards if he could. I think of his figure—his small shoulders—his bringing me in to look at the placard of *The Doctor's Mixture*, just hung up, and fresh from the printer's. His talking of Regnier ; and on my saying he had acted in *les Vieux Garçons*, his saying it was proper : "For you know he is a *vieux garçon* himself." I think of our little dinners, when he was so delightful. O ! that we had had more of them ! Somehow, since I have been here the image of him has been stamped more on me. I see and love him more. And he, poor, poor, hard-working being, to think that all is over for him now. *R.I.P.*

I think of him, too, at Belfast, lying on the sofa while I was telling him about Forster and the Degree at Dublin, and laughing so, and his saying to me lately that "that was one of our regular stock stories—it is capital—very good." The pang I now feel is, "Why hadn't we him with us oftener ?"

Tuesday, June 14, '70.

Just come from Westminster Abbey, leaving outside a sultry, hot, fiercely-glowing day—and walked into the great cool vault, across, under the stained glass window to where was a crowd, and found forms tied together to make a fence, with a black cloth fringe: down below—not very low—the oak coffin in panels—handsome—and a well-cut, bold inscription. How it affected me looking down on that *bright* name, Charles Dickens. I seemed to see his brighter face. To think that he was lying there looking up. A wreath of white roses over his feet, a great bank of ferns at his head, rows of white and red roses down the side.

So ends that melancholy chapter.

CHAPTER VI

A GLIMPSE OF FORSTER, CARLYLE AND BROWNING

In those far-off days there were two eminent men of letters who found themselves associated with Charles Dickens—two men eminently worthy of his friendship and admiration. One Thomas Carlyle, perhaps the greatest literary power and genius of the era; the other John Forster, Boz's faithful and devoted friend and adviser. I have several times seen the trio together, and witnessed the devout and affectionate bearing of both men to the "sage of Chelsea," and his solemn good humour shown to both in return.

And what a trio! What gifted, *original* men—two at least: the third, the chosen confidential friend of both. The adviser, holder of all their secrets—and here was I—*moi qui vous parle*—certainly on very intimate terms with all three. I gladly, therefore, turn aside here for a few moments to call up the images of these very remarkable persons.

One of the most robust, striking, and many-sided characters of his time was John Forster, a rough, uncompromising personage, who, from small and obscure beginnings, shouldered his way to the front until he came to be looked on by all as guide, friend and arbiter. From a struggling newspaperman he emerged into handsome chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields, from thence to a snug house in Montague Square, ending in a handsome stone mansion which he built for himself at Palace Gate, Kensington, with its beautiful library at the back and every luxury of "lettered ease."

If anyone desired to know what Dr. Johnson was like, he might have found him in Forster. There was the same social intolerance, the same "dispersion of humbug," the same loud voice, attuned to a mellifluous softness on occasion, especially with ladies or persons of rank; the love of "talk," in which he assumed the lead, and kept it too, and the contemptuous scorn of what he did not approve. But then all this was backed by admirable training and full knowledge. He was a deeply read, cultivated man, a fine critic, and with all his arrogance, despotism and rough "ways," a most interesting, original, delightful person—for those, that is, whom he liked, and had made his own. His very "build" and appearance was also that of the redoubtable Doctor, so was his loud and hearty laugh. Woe betide the man on whom he chose to "wipe his shoes" (Browning's phrase), for he could wipe them with a will. He would thus roar you down. It was "in*tol*-er-able"—everything was "*in-tol-erable*"—it is difficult to describe the fashion in which he rolled forth the syllables. Other things were "all Stuff!" "Monstrous!" "Incredible!" "Don't tell me!" Indeed I, with many, could find a parallel in the great old Doctor for almost everything he said. Even when there was a smile at his vehemence, he would unconsciously repeat the Doctor's autocratic method.

Forster's life was indeed a striking and encouraging one for those who believe in the example of "self-made men." His aim was somewhat different from the worldly types, who set themselves to become wealthy or to have lands or mansions. His more moderate aspiration was to reach to the foremost rank of the literary world, and he succeeded. He secured for himself an excellent education, never spared himself for study or work, and never rested till he had built himself that noble mansion at Kensington, of which I have spoken, furnished with books, pictures, and rare things. Here he could, Mæcenas-like, entertain his literary friends of all degrees, with a vast number of other friends and acquaintances, notable in their walks of life. It is astonishing what a circle he had gathered round him, and how intimate he was with all—political men such as Brougham, Guizot, Gladstone, Cornewall Lewis, Bright, Cobden (Disraeli he abhorred as much as his friend of Chelsea did); Maclise, Landseer, Millais, Frith, and Stanfield, with dozens of other painters; every writer of the day, almost without exception, late or early. With some of these, such as Anthony Trollope, he was on the friendliest terms, though he did not "grapple them to him with hooks of steel." With the Bar it was the same: he was intimate with the brilliant and agreeable Cockburn, with Lord Coleridge (then plain Mr. Coleridge), who found a knife and a fork laid for him any day that he chose to drop in, which he did pretty often. The truth was that in any company his marked personality, both physical and mental, his magisterial face and loud decided voice, and his reputation of judge and arbiter, at once impressed and commanded attention. People felt that they ought to know this personage at once.

It was something to talk to one who had been intimate with Charles Lamb, of whom he once spoke to me, with tears running down his cheeks, "Ah! poor dear Charles Lamb!" The next day he had summoned his faithful clerk, instructing him to look out among his papers—such was his way—for all the

Lamb letters, which were then lent to me. And most interesting they were. In one Elia calls him "*Foorster*," I fancy taking off Carlyle's pronunciation.

As a writer and critic Forster held a high, unquestioned place, his work being always received with respect as of one of the masters. He had based his style on admirable, if somewhat old-fashioned models, had regularly *learned* to write, which few do now, by studying the standard writers: Swift, Addison, and, above all, the classics.

At this time the intimacy between Boz and the young writer—two young men, for they were only thirty-six—was of the closest. Dickens's admiration of his friend's work on Goldsmith was unbounded. He read it with delight, and expressed his admiration with an affectionate enthusiasm. It was no wonder that in "gentle Goldsmith's life" thus unfolded he found a replica of his own sore struggles. No one knew better the "fiercer crowded misery in garret toil and London loneliness" than he did. Here is Forster's sonnet:—

TO CHARLES DICKENS.

Genius and its rewards are briefly told:
  A liberal nature and a niggard doom,
  A difficult journey to a splendid tomb.
New writ, nor lightly weighed, that story old
In gentle Goldsmith's life I here unfold;
  Thro' other than lone wild or desert gloom,
  In its mere joy and pain, its blight and bloom,
Adventurous. Come with me and behold,
O friend with heart as gentle for distress,
  As resolute with fine wise thoughts to bind
  The happiest to the unhappiest of our kind,
That there is fiercer crowded misery
    In garret toil and London loneliness
Than in cruel islands mid the far off sea.

March, 1848. JOHN FORSTER.

It will be noted what a warmth of affection is shown in these pleasing lines. Some of the verses linger in his memory, the last three especially. The allusion to Dickens is as truthful as it is charming. The " cruel islands mid the far off sea " was often quoted, though there were sometimes sarcastic appeals to the author to name his locality. This "Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith " is a truly charming book—charming in the writing, in its typographic guise, and its forty graceful illustrations by his friends, Maclise, Leech, Browne, etc. It appeared in 1848, and has gone through many editions. A pleasing feature of those times was the close fellowship between the writers and the painters and other artists, as was shown in the devoted affection of Maclise and others to Dickens. Artists and writers are not thus united nowadays.

" My dear Forster," wrote Boz to him, " I cannot sufficiently say how proud I am of what you have done, and how sensible I am of being so tenderly connected with it. I desire no better for my fame, when my personal dustiness shall be past the contrast of my love of order, than such a biographer—and such a critic."

I could always understand that Irish friend of Johnson's, and his rapturous devotion, when I first saw Carlyle. Of all living men at that time you felt: " Here is a really *great* one," and this owing to his complete lack of affectation, and his ever saying, like his brother sage, what he thought. This Irish Doctor used to call out, " Och ! sure I 'd like to *give him half my sleep !* " a truly original testimonial ; or, " I 'd go down on my bare knees every night and black his shoes ! " Is there anyone now " worth while attending to at all" after such tributes as these? No. Surely we are all mediocre together—an age of mediocrity.

All familiar with Carlyle's letters will recall his vehemently expressed detestation of those who suggested his sitting to them for his portrait. He would spurn the idea with his most contemptuous expressions. Not many weeks before his death I had begun to entertain myself by modelling—or striving to model—his noble head, partly from recollection, partly from a photograph. It occurred to me: "What if I ask him to let me bring with me my apparatus, clay, etc., and try to do my best with him in this direction?" To my literal amazement his niece, Mary Carlyle Aitken—then in careful charge of him—wrote to me saying that her uncle would be pleased to sit! How gracious this was of him, and how good-natured! I was friend to "Foorster," Boz and the "set." I can call up the whole scene of that notable day: the quaint old house for background, the panelled walls, the cab laden with clay, my trusty man carrying up the sacred head in its moist wrappings, I following the whole, rather tremulous, as the procession entered the solemn chamber. Here was the grim sage, waiting—solemn and expectant—the excellent niece standing watchful. He greeted me in kindly fashion. Alas! that day must be at least thirty years ago, so it is much faded out; sad, too, to think that I was but indifferently skilled at the time to make profit of so precious an opportunity. What was worse, I felt a shyness in dealing boldly with the clay for fear of losing such likeness as I had got.

I see him now, wrapped in his Scotch plaid by the fire, and clearly in some sort of anticipation. About ten years later I was in the house, then become the museum, and was called upon to fix the room, but could not recall it. I fancy it was his bedroom.

At first he disposed himself with a sort of alacrity.

" Noo, of course, I may talk freely ? "

" Well," I said doubtfully, " I really—— "

" Oh, but I must talk—and smoke too."

His niece, who seemed to supervise, supported my hesitation, but I interposed, and so we set to work. I forget now the many things he touched upon—mostly " poor Foorsther—trew honest fellow !—Dickens — a noble hairt — both long since dead." I recall the actual words of one question put with a shrewd, sarcastic tone : " What d 'ye hear noo of *our Jew Premier ?* "

Finally, after about a couple of hours' stay—for I would not trespass—I gathered up my tools and apparatus and took my way thence, much marvelling at my own assurance. The work, such as it is, has found a refuge in Chelsea Town Hall. It represents him in the notorious felt hat and shawl. I fervently begged of his niece to give me, as a souvenir of this meeting, one of his precious churchwardens, and she was good enough to say she would send it on ; but it never reached me—not a surprising thing, as it was a " ticklish," impossible thing to pack, being so brittle.

His friend Forster was not one of those niggard monopolists who jealously keep their great literary friends in a preserve to themselves, as though in dread of impairing their own influence. He was ever large-hearted and generous in this direction. You constantly heard him : " My dear friend, you must know Dickens," or " you shall meet Carlyle." With Forster to announce or engage for a thing, to say " shall " or " must," meant that it was as good as done.

Indeed, it is difficult to think of Carlyle or appreciate him without calling up the image of John Forster, who was really almost as much his invaluable ally and assistant as he was of Boz. One of the witnesses to Carlyle's will was Hares, or Haires, Forster's own butler at Palace Gate House, the same who, on his master's death, quaintly informed me what was the real cause of his death. "Fact was, sir, he had no *staminer*."

I can recall meetings with the great man of a quite unofficial kind. Here was a quartette dinner: Forster, Dickens, Thomas Carlyle, and myself! That was a privilege, indeed! And a delightful meeting it was. I recall Boz "playing round" the sage as Garrick did round Johnson—affectionately and in high good humour and wit, and, I could well see, much pleasing the old lion. It was pleasing to see him after dinner smoking away in his rough garments, for he was privileged to dress as he would. And it will be asked, what did I in that *galère?* How did I get there and into such company? Well, simply by no merit of my own, but by favour and owing to the unwearying kindness of my host. I may be absolved from an appearance of egotism or vanity if I quote the following, which will explain how it came about, and which is really typical of the hundreds of good offices which "Fuz" was ever doing —

"I will be very angry with you (really angry and discontented every way) if you do not teach yourself, before you next cross the Channel, to regard this house as in some sort a second 'roof-tree'—and if you do not come here as a matter of course, and without any nonsense or botheration, very frequently indeed. That is as long as it may be pleasant to you to do so—and not to refuse a genuine pleasure to me.

"On this head I will not say more than that I have a real regard for you, and that you have no surer way of making me happy and obliged than by coming to see me. Do you know what Wallenstein said of Max—

"'For oh! he stood beside me like my youth.'"

Later, I recall being bidden to a sort of banquet at Palace Gate. The sage always made an exception in favour of "the good Forsther," as distinguished from common lion-hunters, and by special favour would consent to dine and be exhibited to a few. On this occasion "the table was full," and we had a notable gathering: The Brownings (father and son), Robert Lytton, Elwin the Editor, who was in obstreperous spirits, and told humorously to the whole table an account of his drive with a madman on that very day. This was, in truth, a reconciliation dinner, for the once eternally beloved Browning. "My dear friend," used Forster to say to me, "you *should* come to dine on Sunday, but know *that* is *consecrated* to Browning—nothing interferes with that Sunday dinner. 'Tis sacred. It has gone on for years."

Yet after years and years of this intimacy a violent quarrel occurred, with a dual threat of "hurling the decanter," etc. Amazing! But as Boz was so fond of quoting, "These violent delights have violent endings." The quaintest thing, however, for a cynic to note was that actually at this "dinner of reconciliation" the quarrel was nigh breaking out afresh, our host "setting down" a guest a little too triumphally, and I, who was beside the poet, saw him biting his lip and striving to control himself.

And it always struck me that Boz was not much drawn to this poet, who seemed of a rather cold temperament, and besides liked the false world of fashion. I constantly found him at Forster's house, and the pair seemed to be devoted friends ever. To myself, he was alway friendly, though I must confess I was often embarrassed by my host's tumultuous praise and invitations to his friend to praise what *he* praised. It was in this way. I once described to my friend a recitation of a young lady who gave Poe's "The Bells" with pantomimic illustrations; for instance, always simulating the pulling of the rope, so as to convey the fire bell, wedding bell, and so on. A rarer comical exhibition I never witnessed, and I used to be called to "do it" for a friend. Poor Browning, however, bore it very well. Alas!—"*Ay de me!*" as the sage used to *groan* it—have we such *dramatic* figures before us now! They were *characters* and powerful characters, so that they arrested the eye and secured attention and interest.

Forster was a most "tempestuous" man—a perfect Berserker; yet with Carlyle it was wonderful to see how gentle, how devotional almost, he could be, treating him like some altogether "superman," to use the jargon of our time, attuning his voice to the lowest, sweetest accents, anticipating his every wish, and striving to show gratitude for the condescension of a visit. I well recall on one occasion how the host, in a very delicate way, showed how much he wished to please his guest. After dinner, when the ladies had gone, there was the usual little flourish about "Mr. Carlyle's churchwarden and tobacco," which had been sent out for to a special tobacconist, brought in and laid before him with much formality, we all looking on reverently as he filled the bowl and lit. We looked again as he drew his first inhalation, and a very old-fashioned and not unpicturesque figure he presented, sunk in armchair by the fire with the yard-long clay in his fingers. I and Robert Lytton, thinking there was now a general license, drew forth our cigars and lit up; but we presently heard our host calling from the top of the table in friendly rebuke, "My dear Robert Lytton and Percy, this is all very well, but Mr. Carlyle is one thing—you are another. Anything *he* pleases to do here he is welcome to do, and I am proud that he does it. *He* may smoke, but I have not given the privilege to others at this table of mine. You have both taken it on yourselves without consulting me at all. Well, well, what 's done is done. So I suppose you must go on." We, of course, were penitent, but perfectly understood for whom the speech was really intended. And the great Thomas chuckled hoarsely to himself, enjoying his friend's humour. This illustrates what now would seem a singular social restraint—the law against smoking after dinner.

There was something highly musical or melodious in Carlyle's voice which it was delightful to listen to—a sort of chanting or monotone, very rich, rising and falling. The laugh or "chuckle" was hardly so pleasant, having something rather bitter and scoffing, a sort of "gibing," as it were.

This dinner was a pleasant one. Our host had the art, from long practice, of keeping all "in movement," and rather skilfully drew out his great friend without unduly pressing him. It was after the ladies had gone that my turn came rather unexpectedly in the shape of a regular bear's hug, much as Bozzy got shaken and mauled at his first presentation to his sage. The Irish Church was being abolished, and the sage declaimed rather vehemently on the topic; but to our surprise, condemned it as "puir foolish, hasty thing." He spoke in a very interesting way, deploring the loss of the local clergyman who, he protested, "had a vara *ceevilizin'* influence on the native." He then spoke of the various agitations, repeal of the Union, and so on. But when I incautiously ventured to say half-laughingly, "There you have, at least, the logical solution—departure," a perfect *coup de théâtre* followed—*coup de foudre* rather. With a look of fury and in hoarse tones he roared out, "*We 'll joost cut every one of yer thraits first.*" Shall I ever forget the delighted roar of enjoyment that burst from the listeners! They were enchanted, as they told me later; were all even infinitely *obliged to me* for "poking up the old Lion," and I had done so effectively. I forget what reply I made, but I saw that "the old Lion" enjoyed the situation and the general applause.

In the drawing-room I was standing apart—perhaps looking a little rueful after my castigation—when I heard the chime of his fine voice at my ear: "Well, tell me now," he said gently, "and how goes on your account of that wratched creature, Dodd, the forger pairson? Jest tell me all aboot him." At that time I was also busy with a Life of Sterne, the first that had been attempted, and Boz used to be infinitely merry on what he called "my *two* disreputable parsons." And Carlyle entered into the matter with apparent or real interest. Here was his little *amende* for the rough-and-tumble onset below. How amiable of *him!* It reminded me irresistibly of the scene in Boswell's book, of Johnson's rude setting down of Goldy, and of his coming up to him later in the night with some soothing words. "It is much, sir, from you that I can take ill!" I might have replied with Goldy.

By the way, may I claim here as a writer to have done a rather unusual thing? To have written a Life of and also edited Johnson, and fashioned a bronze statue of him, to be seen in the Strand; to have written a Life of Boswell, and made a statue of him for Lichfield; to have written a Life of Sterne and fashioned a sitting bronze figure to be seen in the Cathedral Library at York; to have written a Life of Dickens, and set up busts of him in Holborn and Bath. This is at least a rather unique record.

I recall yet another interesting night at this same Palace Gate House, where an unbounded hospitality seemed ever to reign. The kindly Forster had asked me and my two sisters, well-trained musicians, to dine and meet the sage. It was a large party—Mrs. Lehman, *née* Chambers (of Edinburgh), and some more. By a rare stroke I found myself beside the great man, but discovered, rather to my surprise, that he did not encourage talk, being otherwise busy. And the cue was not to disturb him. But at times I would hear him breaking into an odd *sotto voce* comment—as if to himself—on any statement that caught his ear, as when some Bishop's or Archbishop's proceedings or speeches were mentioned, "Ach! the puir auld dotard!" followed by a sort of ferocious chuckle. This was really very funny, and the drollery was that almost everyone alluded to was invariably described as "a wratched auld dodderin' fule." As he spoke his words were literally addressed to his *plate!* The cue, however, was to leave him entirely alone.

He had a passion for all national airs—notably for his own, also relishing the Irish—above all, the *Marseillaise*, *Ça ira*, and the like. My sisters knew many of these lilts, as did the Scotch lady, so we were likely to have a "field night." My youngest sister, who had a well-trained voice, knew what was expected, and came prepared with her stock of "Irish melodies" —*Meeting of Waters*, and the rest—with others of a more florid cast. I had warned her that the way to the sage's heart was not by "show off" paths, but by appealing to his sympathies; but this advice was not followed. At the close there came a long-sustained chuckling, with a sort of private commentary, addressed half to himself, though not to the singer, "Ach! the puir Tammy—puir little Tammy Moore!" This over again several times. "Puir Tammy! 'call my spirit from this troubled world.' Likely he'd go! Hech! hech!" It would be hard to give an idea of the profound dramatic *contempt* conveyed in these words. It seemed to say, "That trumpery tatter of a creatur!" To me I confess it seemed convincing, and the "puir Tammy's" reputation was demolished on the spot. "Ach! but then Rabbie Burrens!" he broke out again in a deeply admiring fit, adding a clever criticism contrasting the two Bards. He graciously and good-naturedly *tried* to admire, as one song of "puir Tammy's" came after the other. "Ach, yes, that's pratty well—but not much. Somehow it does not reach the hairt. Ah! the puir Tammy! hech! hech! hech! wi' his Bulbuls and Bendemeer streams. Hech! hech!"

Then came the turn of the Scottish lady, who was well fitted for her duty, having a genuine national spirit, and putting much native feeling into her songs. Of course, she captured the sage, and furnished song after song to his delight and approbation. But when my elder sister, ever a thoughtful, capable person, found herself at the piano, playing snatches of the melodies, straying through the minstrelsy, touching a few snatches here, a few there, hither and thither, by a happy chance the sage called out, "D 'ye ken *Coulin?*" Her answer was to strike up at once in soft appealing chords, and with due feeling and passion, "The last glimpse of Erin." The spell wrought at once—he was enchanted! He listened without a word of interruption till the close. Some other things were tried, but he broke out, "Ach! play *Coulin* again!" and after an interval was heard yet once again to order, "Play *Coulin* again!" For long after in our family that became a pleasant catchword, "*Play Coulin again!*" calling up at once that interesting night and the ever-pleasant and original sage himself. It proved to me it was an old friend and favourite of his, which he could "growl" now and then in his own fashion.

When Dickens died he left to Forster in his honest, manly will a valuable memorial—his gold watch, chain, and seals, which he himself had carried so long, heralding the bequest with the happy words, "To my trusty friend, John Forster." Nothing could be more appropriate, for to all his friends was John Forster "trusty." When Forster died, it was found that he had bequeathed this watch and chain to his also "trusty" friend, Thomas Carlyle. So thus had the little monitor been carried by no less than three distinguished men of letters. It might have been worthily preserved, duly shown and cherished for such memories. But this was not to be. Carlyle, it seems, had handed it over to his niece (she tells us) to do what she willed with it. In February, 1876, the very month and year in which the good Forster died, Mrs. Mary

Carlyle Aitken tells us, "My uncle gave me the watch, &c., which had belonged to Charles Dickens. I gave away the watch, the seals, and the chain in my uncle's lifetime, without asking his permission." Had his permission been asked, would he have shown this indifference or the contrary? An interesting speculation.

But a solution is readily found, and it even does credit to the sage's delicately sensitive heart. He had his *own watch*, a faithful companion, which he had carried for innumerable years, which he cherished affectionately, as though it had been one of his own loved kindred at Scotsbrig. It was doing its duty still, and would until his end. Why should he admit a rival? This he had no notion of leaving locked up in drawer unwound, doing no duty in living a sham life. So he gave it away.

Many have still echoing in their ears his noble testimonial to his friend, uttered in a burst of grief: "The good, the noble, the high-souled, ever friendly Dickens,—every inch of him an honest man." These poignant, stirring words have always seemed the best and most appropriate epitaph. It is so genuine and so true. For "high-souled" he was; but above all "ever friendly," never showing caprice, or humours, or relaxing, and this *because* he was "high-souled."

II

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

"Household Words"

CHAPTER VII

A NEW DEPARTURE. DICKENS AS AN EDITOR

It is now over forty years since Charles Dickens passed away from us, to the universal grief of the nation. Who will forget that disastrous morning when the news spread abroad? There had been a general feeling that he was to be with us for many years to come; he seemed to be a sort of *asset* of the nation, the unique *writer*. No one, it was felt, could write like him, or, at least, in his fashion. There were no competitors or rivals; not as now, when the general market is crowded with candidates, all competing with one another and playing, to use his own phrase, on "their little jobbing fiddles." The great story-teller was gone from us for ever.

The great story-teller! The one and only! That was the popular notion. Yet it is forgotten that this was but one element in his tumultuous life. His great aim was to be ever in touch with the busy, fascinating stream of human emotions and vagaries that were seething and bubbling around him, of which he would be the interpreter and preacher.

Here was his life and pastime. We can see it in his wonderful, profuse letters, into which he put his whole labour, soul, and entire self. He could see nothing of interest or excitement passing without longing to take his share, and giving his interpretation, serious or humorous. From the very beginning—from the days of his *Sketches by Boz*, he was the general commentator, serious or humorous.

John Forster's truly classical and scholarlike account of his great friend has been accepted as the official, sufficient life of Dickens. And it was truly a happy chance that such a writer, and with such favourable opportunities of personal intimacy and complete knowledge, should have been at hand to execute the duty. Fortunate was Dickens and fortunate the biographer in such a conjunction. Forster had lofty, severe conceptions as to his duty. He disdained small things or trivialities, however interesting, and ruthlessly expunged them all from his programme. Like Podsnap, his prototype, he put them behind him. Yet Boz's course was one of adventure and romance, chequered with all manner of exciting and amusing episodes, which were thus completely ignored or passed by, Forster considering them not of the official essence. Yet such details are, beyond a doubt, truly interesting, even as a matter of entertainment. The public would like to hear them, and had Forster condescended to set them forth, he could have done so in a very congenial fashion.

With this view he all but completely passed over that essential and most important section of Boz's life that was devoted to periodical writing. How important was this function may be conceived when we find that it absorbed all his time and thoughts for some twenty years of arduous, never-ceasing labour and drudgery, pursued from week to week, with scarcely an hour's relaxation—to wit, the "conducting" or editing of his two great journals. "Conducting" was the fitting word, for, like the manager of a theatre, he had to find and direct suitable men and characters, study his public, play upon their feelings, follow and divine their humours, amuse and divert by the agency of others, and, when that failed him, by his own. He was all the while following the currents of the world about him, studying, observing, contributing to the gaiety of the nation, and, above all, entering on a new world of life and fancies, wholly different from the world of fiction in which he had hitherto lived. And this process was at work for a score of years.

Now who shall say that this was not a powerful element—a new-found life—which must have tried, influenced, the "conductor" a great deal, because it brought him into contact with so many startling novelties and excitements. And only fancy it! Twenty years of it—of that never-flagging, never-relaxing weekly work. That editing was ever in his mind, ever before him, from Monday until Saturday; and what characters and intellects, of graduated degrees, did he find; what strange lessons, pictures adventures of a new life did he not discover?

It is therefore no exaggeration to say that anyone who would calmly take stock of Boz's character and methods must make his laborious way through the forty or fifty volumes of these journals, and follow his Dickens carefully. He will find traces of him on every page; as now roused to excitement and anger when denouncing some abuse; now vindicating himself from a slander (as it seemed to him); now relating some humorous adventures of his own; now lamenting an old comrade; now describing his boyish days, his schools, and in short supplying (unconsciously often) innumerable sketches and facets of Charles Dickens under every form and condition. Most welcome forms and conditions they were.

It seems to me at this moment that no one could be more suitable than myself for the exhibiting of this little panorama. I come here as the very last of his "merry men" and assistants, the one who for nigh fifteen years out of the twenty of his "periodical" experiences was ever beside him or in close confidence. As I turn over the volumes I can see, and perhaps I alone, how many a tale "thereby hangs;" and perhaps I alone can readily supply the meaning of the various allusions. I, indeed, know the whole *carte de pays*—the play itself, the scenery, with the many characters, and, above all, I can thus set forth the characters of the engaging manager in a fashion that no one has yet attempted. For I had full opportunities of seeing his brilliance, his patience and forbearance, his energies, and his unfailing good-humour and kindness. In fulfilling this task I believe that I shall do the greater honour to his most precious memory.

Dickens had given the world about twelve "capital" novels during a span of thirty-four years—say one at three years' interval. This contrasts with Sir Walter's labours during nearly the same period; his works ranged on the library shelf, including, of course, essays and poems, fill exactly one hundred volumes. Hence the enormous profits so far exceeding Dickens's; yet it would have been impossible for the latter to have furnished more in the period; and had he attempted to do so, custom would speedily have staled "his infinite variety."

Living as he did in handsome style, and burdened with many responsibilities, he must have found that the producing of novels hardly supplied him with a sufficient income. But this he at last found a way to supplement by two highly-important sources of supply. The one was his Public Readings; the other, his Journal. The latter became a regular weekly burden, which he carried on bravely and with never-flagging conscientious labour for over twenty years. His shrewdness in forecasting the success of his venture was to be more than justified, and there is no doubt but it brought him in a large income for many years. But how few of his readers nowadays think of him as a permanent journalist, a writer ever on the watch for innumerable personal and descriptive sketches, all owing to that ceaseless fertility of his mind, which when it had conceived a speculation of humorous fancy was compelled to set it down at once and give it permanence. This fertility of his was due to the feeling of creation in which he found delight. There are many writers of fiction who find a perfect entertainment in giving to print all their private fancies of this kind. Dickens's "output" in this way is perfectly astounding. Did he feel indignant at a crying abuse, he sat down and wrote. Did he note an absurdity, he sat down and wrote sarcastically. Did he feel himself overflowing with compassion, he wrote again. Did he take pleasure in an amusing or grotesque scene which suited his feelings, he must sketch it. The result is that we have the *man* entirely before us, and abundantly before us. We see him in every light. A biography of him could be fashioned from a scanty study of his two journals, where he bares his heart, and displays without stint his boyhood adventures, thoughts, feelings. What drudgery, it will be said. But no, he was expending himself to please himself; no one, indeed, ever wrote so much except Scott. Boz's influence is spread over forty or fifty volumes of his two journals, not merely in his own written contributions, but in the direction, the suggestion, the inspiration of others. In familiar phrase, he is "all over the place."

Letters, too, formed a regular portion of his work; a letter with him was a literary matter artistically composed. He gave to it of his best, putting in witty things, happy turns, and pleasant forms. As one reads now when the writing is faded, one can see at once that they were composed with care, and that he had taken pains to please the recipients according to his favourite maxim — everything worth doing should be done in the best way. But what a burden were his letters—a dozen at the least in the day. He had no notion of a secretary who, as in Irving's case, could simulate his principal's handwriting and style; and thus it was that in truth he might be considered a born *periodical* writer. He was ever longing to express his own feelings, opinions, even recollections of his childhood, which were his grand storehouse. He felt that everything of value that he had to say really came from his own personality, and that therefore it must be genuine. And then there was his own popularity. Every eye was turned towards him, eagerly waiting what he would think or say on any subject; like Dumas, in France, with whom everybody insisted on being in communication, and who in consequence had to talk to his admirers every day.

We in our times have no conception of such a state of things. This notion of a magazine thus inspired and directed, not merely edited in the popular phrase, would be impossible in our day, for the reason that there is no one either to inspire, or whose "inspiration" people would care for. Homogeneousness is not asked for nowadays; the popular magazine is a sort of hotch-pot.

More than ten years previous to the production of *Household Words* he had all but launched a regular weekly paper, under the title of "Master Humphrey's Clock," on exactly the same "lines" as *Household Words.* It was only his own superabundant talent that came in and swept away the whole design.

His proclamation as to the new journal ran as follows:—

"Master Humphrey hopes (and is almost tempted to believe) that all degrees of readers, young or old, rich or poor, sad or merry, easy of amusement or difficult to entertain, may find something agreeable in the face of his old Clock. That when they have made its acquaintance, its voice may sound cheerfully in their ears, and be suggestive of none but pleasant thoughts. That they may come to have favourite and familiar associations connected with its name, and to look for it as for a welcome friend.

"From week to week, then, Master Humphrey will set his Clock, trusting that while it counts the hours, it will sometimes cheat them of their heaviness, and that while it marks the tread of Time, it will scatter a few slight flowers on the Old Mower's path.

"Until the specified period arrives, and he can enter freely upon that confidence with his readers which he is impatient to maintain, he may only bid them a short farewell, and look forward to their next meeting."

As a model for his venture, the old *Spectator* was still before him, and he could not resist introducing "Will Honeycomb" and even "Sir Roger" himself disguised as "the deaf gentleman" and "Mr. Miles." As a man of fine taste and good reading, the author relished these models, but they were unfamiliar and too antique for the public taste. Mr. Pickwick with his servant and old Weller were revived, but the public were not to be attracted; and after a few numbers' trial he abruptly abandoned the whole scheme and developed one of the stories into a formal novel of the usual length, *The Old Curiosity Shop.* After this failure many years were to go by before the plan was again revived.

His ambitions, however, lay in this direction, and it was scarcely surprising, therefore, that when success and opportunity came he should turn from the heavy, responsible labours of fashioning a novel every two years or so to the lighter and more vivacious task of directing an organ of his own, in which he could speak freely to his readers and exhibit all the facets of his own unrivalled fancy and imagination, denounce folly, and bring laughter while he denounced? This was entirely a way of his own. Excellent specimens are found in his two journals, of which such papers are the staple. We forget, however, that he had served a ten years' apprenticeship to this art in a weekly journal, *The Examiner*, directed by his admiring friend, John Forster, so that when he came to administer his own paper he was already well trained. There are a number of these papers printed in the official collections, but there are more which have not been identified. We may admire the variety of topics, all congenial to him, and the airy, lively touch. He had had nine or ten years' service in *The Morning Chronicle*, where he was training his powers of minute observation and the study of characters. When, therefore, he set out as a regular editor no one could have come better prepared. He was an unrivalled *shorthand* writer, a diligent student of character in the police court, an explorer of low and middle-class life, a vivacious story-teller and light essayist. He thus came equipped in admirable style, and brought with him an amazing energy and versatility.

With such varied gifts Dickens had naturally ever nourished the fancy of having a journal of his own, which was to be, as he said himself, on the lines of the old *Spectator* or of Goldsmith's *Bee*—a compound of short stories and essays—a curious, old-fashioned notion. The field was open enough for such a scheme; there was, indeed, only one such paper of any importance before the public, namely *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, a very sober, excellent, and instructive organ, but somewhat lacking in brilliancy and humour. It had no *personal* inspiration, but it has always been most sagaciously edited up to the present hour on sober, solid lines, ever preserving its safe traditions and always entertaining and readable.* There was also for a while Leigh Hunt's *London Journal*, *The Printing Machine*, and other oddly-named things.

It must be said that here was opening a sort of crisis in Dickens's momentous life: "a record," indeed, as it may be termed, of sheer strenuous work. No other instance can be furnished of such intense literary labour as he was now to inaugurate, one which was to be maintained at the same high pressure for twenty years. Twenty years of *weekly editing* rarely interrupted or devolved—proof correcting in galley-slips, on the most lavish scale (most trying to the eyes), all continued for twenty years. All the while the engendering of an expected and necessary novel going on, with the searching for and selection of long serials, and the devising of plans for increasing circulation. Twenty years of such editing! Incredible! There have been but few, if any, instances of so long a course of *weekly* editing by a man of genius. But he had within him this amazing store of energies, which carried him on. And yet this was no rough-shod, hard, unsympathising being, who had not time to be tolerant and gentle.

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* I speak with gratitude, for the first encouragement I received during my long literary career was from Leitch Ritchie, its editor, about 1855, a matter of no importance to anybody, but which I please myself in recording.

All the time there might have been yet another influence working on Dickens which led him to make new and more vigorous exertions to retain the public attention. When we think of him, it is always difficult to exclude the image of Thackeray, "his great rival," as it is the fashion—no doubt justly—to call him. It was certainly a disturbing element that presented itself about the year 1847, when it had to be taken seriously. Still, Boz had enjoyed a ten years or so "run" of triumphant success, and could not complain, though he might lament. But for twelve or thirteen years onward he had to *share* where before he had monopoly. The new writer, who had come on the stage two or three years before, was so encouraged by success and praise that he contended for supremacy, giving out "that there was not room for both in the same tree." Later on he was to set on foot a rival magazine.

Comparison has been often made between the rivals "Boz" and "Titmarsh," but it is a rather fallacious test. One element, an immense and all but important " driving wheel " in Dickens' production, was his intense, heartfelt sympathy, and his overpowering feeling for the poor and suffering. Here there is an utter blank in Thackeray, in whose writings these elements are completely absent. In Scott's writings also I really believe there are but one or two passages in which he sympathises with the sorrows of the poor—the loss of the fisherman's son, for instance, in *The Antiquary* and the noble grief of the bereaved father. Thackeray, as we all know, dealt satirically with the follies of the well-to-do, and he was sympathetic with the middle class ; but with the abject poor, their sufferings, feelings, methods, and merits, he was certainly not familiar.

Dickens, had he lacked the story-teller's gift, and fallen into the hands of some astute and liberal manipulator, might have found himself permanently bound to the periodical press, and made a name by short stories and light sketches or essays. Fortunately this disaster was not to be, though he always seemed to hanker after the short story, thus garnishing his earlier novels with introduced tales of a not very *apropos* kind. I have, indeed, always thought that these were " remainders " lying in his desk, returned as " unsuitable," which, on lacking material to complete his monthly part, he found useful as filling a vacant place. Yet, strange to say, these " stop-gaps " are most effective, the best and most dramatic of their kind. Who would part with the romantic, highly-coloured tales given in *Pickwick* (save, perhaps, with " the Parish Clerk," the only one inferior), which most of us have read again and again, though we know them by heart ? Who would part with the ghostly mail coach story told by the Bagman so appropriately ? I doubt if anything of Washington Irving's or of Scott's comes near it, though it is often said that the latter's *Wandering Willie* was a matchless story of its kind. In the *Sketches* are found many personal and autobiographical touches and memories ; he is constantly illustrating his various statements by recollections. I believe the truth was that he ever found his imagination stimulated by such memories.

CHAPTER VIII

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS" FOUNDED, 1850

DICKENS had now been some fifteen or sixteen years steadily furnishing his novels at almost regular intervals before his plans for the new enterprise began to mature. No doubt he was greatly tempted—perhaps most tempted—by the prospect of certain and enormous "profits beyond the dreams of avarice," profits that had become necessary to him from his more expensive scale of living and an increasing family. Accordingly, in the year 1849 he had begun seriously to lay out his plan, which he did in a thorough, business-like fashion.

In September, 1850, we find him writing to his "trusty" friend and counsellor, Forster, that he really thought the conception was at last taking shape. In the following month he could announce that his notion was "a weekly journal, price either three-halfpence or twopence; matter in part original and in part selected, and always having, if possible, a little good poetry." He then unfolded the details of his rather curious scheme. "Upon the selected matter I have particular notions. One is that it should always be *a subject.* For example, a history of Piracy, in connection with which there is a vast deal of extraordinary and romantic and almost unknown matter, a history of Knight-Errantry, etc, etc. The original matter to be essays, reviews, letters, theatrical criticisms, etc., etc., as amusing as possible, but all distinctly and boldly going to what in one's view ought to be the spirit of the people and the time. Now, to bind all this together and to get a character established, as it were, which any of the writers may maintain without difficulty, I want to suppose a certain *shadow*, which may go into any place by sunlight, moonlight, starlight, firelight, candlelight, and be in all homes and all nooks and corners, and be supposed to be cognisant of everything and go everywhere without the least difficulty—which may be in the theatre, in the palace, the House of Commons, the prisons, the unions, the churches, the railroad, in the sea, abroad and at home. I don't think it would do to call the paper *The Shadow*, but I want something tacked to that title to express the notion of its being a cheerful, useful, and always welcome shadow. I want to open the first number with this Shadow's account of himself and his family; I want to have all the correspondence addressed to him. I want him to issue his warnings from time to time that he is going to fall on such and such a subject, or to explain such and such a piece of humbug, or that he may be expected shortly in such and such a place. I want him to loom as a fanciful thing all over London, and to get up a general notion of "What will the Shadow say about this, I wonder? Is the Shadow here?" and so forth. Do you understand? . . . I have an enormous difficulty in expressing what I mean in this stage of the business; but I think the importance of the idea is that, once stated on paper, there is no difficulty in keeping it up. I want to express in the title and in the grasp of the idea to express also that it is the thing at everybody's elbow and in everybody's footsteps—at a window, by the fire, in the street, in the house, from infancy to old age, everybody's inseparable companion. Now, do you make anything of this? Which I let off as if I were a bladder, full of it, and you had punctured me. I have not breathed the idea to anyone, but I have a lively hope that it *is* an idea, and that out of it the whole scheme may be hammered."

It is easy to understand the enthusiasm which dictated this animated sketch, which is in itself an effective bit of writing; it seems, however, a little fanciful. Not less curious is it to note how he still hankered after the old "Humphrey's Clock" pattern, this mysterious "Shadow" taking the place of the unpractical clock case. Indeed, all through his life he had this strange, almost romantic, fancy for a poetical sort of "framework," destined to enclose and colour a collection of short stories. The short story had ever for him a charm, because it embodied some dramatic idea which could be struck off at once. Even in *Pickwick* and *Nicholas Nickleby* he could not resist introducing this shape of story, and it must be said they are artfully and effectively introduced, and the situation which introduces them is always well coloured and dramatic.*

Still it was a wholly different thing to think of sustaining a regular weekly journal dealing with miscellaneous topics by such means as "Shadows" and "clock cases." It was, in truth, but a cumbrous machinery. It was too artificial to have effect beyond a week or two, and from its character would have been a permanent "drag" on the undertaking. The viewing of all things grave and gay, practical as well as poetical, through this eternal " Shadow " would have become intolerable. It would have been felt at once that the " Shadow " was nothing but Dickens himself. The " Shadow " might have served its purpose as a Christmas legend of the " Carol " pattern, but would have spent itself in the effort ; nor would the public much care, as the author so fondly anticipated, what the " Shadow would say or do next." Still, we must sympathise with the enthusiasm and ardour which engendered this notion.

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* Thus are we pleased when Mr. Pickwick, sitting up at night in Bath, finds a story in an old drawer.

The practical good sense of his friend and counsellor saved him from what would have been a perfect shipwreck, and brought him to a more sober view. " I could not," says Forster, " make anything out of it that had a quite feasible look," a sensible speech that really embodied every objection. He saw that such a fanciful basis could not support the practical scheme of furnishing valuable information and instruction, even in the most agreeable forms. Still the sanguine author clung to his " Shadow." " I don't lay much stress on your grave doubts, but *more anon.*" He soon became shaken in his faith, and after a business-like conversation with his friend, no more was heard of the " Shadow."

It would be an interesting speculation to consider or discuss whether this new editorial department and his assiduous, unbroken devotion to it during some twenty years was of advantage or injury to his great gifts. He certainly discovered a new promised land, where he could range unchecked, do what he willed, give free scope to his imagination and powers, and above all teach. There can be no doubt, on the other hand, that injury was done, owing to the profuse *dissipation* of his powers, and to the compelling influence of the journalistic forms and devices. From these again he had to revert of a sudden to his true *métier*—the story—which must have reflected the long and uninterrupted influence of the hurried weekly efforts. His style and powers of character drawing must have been impaired, and could not be recalled at will for a particular occasion. The *Household Words* pattern was of an ephemeral cast, with a deceptive, rather pyrotechnical style utterly opposed to the concentrated and deliberated character of the monthly part of his story. And then there was the weary, never-ending weekly drudgery of *editing*, proof correcting, reading and selecting, all to be done by himself in person, which must have enfeebled his buoyant personality and obstreperous, exciting course, when he set himself to the writing of a story.

The next important matter was the choice of a working editor or sub-editor. He himself was to be the "conductor," rather than editor, the practical editor selecting desirable papers and dealing with the contributors. His friend Forster here suggested to him an admirable assistant with whom he had worked on the *Daily News*.

This William Henry Wills, the indefatigable sub-editor, was something of "a character," a little pragmatical, taking his office *au grand sérieux*, rather *au plus grand*, something of a cockney, and with a persuasion that he had a fund of humour. His chief, I think, enjoyed his little ways immensely, and was fond of quoting his odd forms and expressions with a sly twinkle, such as his imagined nautical tastes, with allusions to an imagined nautical drama, *The Larboard Fin*. Forster disliked him, and he had no love for Forster. Once when both met at his rooms Boz, as I have already said, had to request his lieutenant to retire in the interests of peace. Yet he was a thorough good fellow—true, faithful, staunch to his friends, and doing kind or good-natured things. He would expend himself in long and quite unprofessional letters, showing that he ever delighted in confidentially expressing his thoughts and feelings.*

No one could have suited Dickens better, or was more likely to be useful to him. He had a complete faith in his chief, and carried out his wishes in the most scrupulous fashion, without debate and according to his intentions. Having known him for over twenty years, I can testify to his steady friendship, which knew neither change nor caprice.† I shall have more to tell by and by of this worthy man.

The energetic Dickens threw his whole soul into the preparations for the work. He started with some three numbers "made up" in advance, and could note such minute points as the fashion of printing the heading, *Household Words* found in the title. He was besides difficult to please in such matters.

Then came the great question of a name. He first thought of "The Robin," next of "Charles Dickens: a weekly journal designed for the instruction and entertainment of all classes of readers, conducted by himself." This would scarcely have done. Then of "The House hold Voice," "The Household Guest," "The Comrade," "The Microscope," "The Highway of Life," "The Lever," "The Holly Tree," "Everything;" but "I rather think," he said, "'The Voice' it is, that is 'The Household Voice;'" this he thought "pretty," and so it is.*

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* He had written in the very first number of *Punch*, and showed some skill in ridicule. When the *Daily News* was being started he was lucky enough to be brought into connection with Dickens, then on the paper; but Wills presently drifted away to Edinburgh to edit *Chambers's Journal*, an excellent training school, which seemed to have equipped him expressly for Dickens's purposes. He was appointed his assistant editor in 1849. This post he held for close on twenty years.

It was amusing to hear him retail his early adventures in Edinburgh. How on his first arrival at a party he, an unfriended youth, ventured on a jest relative to a stout lady who had made a fortune out of breeding cattle—"All flesh is grass," etc. There was a dead silence; his too literal hearers looked at him distrustfully, when an elderly, good-natured listener, pitying his case, interposed: "Well, I know what the young mon means. Ye see the animal feeds on the grass, and the grass is then transmuted into the animal juices and flesh-forming particles, and so ye see the grass is finally transformed into flesh." He was thus acquitted.

† Mr. Lehmann, M.P., has given a very full and graphic portrait of this capable editor and his connection with Dickens in his book, "Charles Dickens as Editor."

So, by a happy inspiration the long familiar *Household Words* was chosen — a most adroit, expressive, sympathetic, Dickensian title, that was to travel everywhere in happy association with its author.†

In titles generally Dickens always displayed a rare tact and versatility, not merely in the case of his books, but in that of casual and ephemeral papers. They were always quaintly suggestive, often humorous, an exact and inviting epitome of what the paper contained. It is only those who have tried to devise suitable titles and note their own failures who can appreciate the difficulties of the task. He could not start his venture or, indeed, do anything practical until he had arranged this weighty matter. "My determination," he wrote, "to settle the knotty point of the title arises out of my knowledge that I shall never be able to do anything for the work until it has a fixed name."

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* Among his papers was found a whole sheaf of titles, as to one of which he had half made up his mind—

"THE FORGE.
A weekly Journal conducted
by Charles Dickens.

with the motto—

"Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought."
LONGFELLOW.

Here was also "The Hearth," "The Crucible," "The Anvil," "Charles Dickens's Own," "Seasonable Leaves," "Evergreen Leaves," "Home," "Home Music," "Change," "Time and Tide," "Twopence," "English Bells," "Weekly Bells," "The Rocket," "Good Humour."

† Once at Aix-la-Chapelle the German attendant brought me a little book which he thought would please me, "Owzelverd von Dickens."

Beneath the title of the magazine was set out a very suitable and (apparently) well-known line from Shakespeare, which most happily described the character of the periodical—

> "Familiar in their mouths as Household Words."

Nothing could be more entirely familiar to the community—the author himself a Household Word, his writings Household Words, and the paper to become as "familiar." How happy and how *apropos!* But strange to say the text of the line does not follow that of the bard, who writes—

> "Familiar in *his* mouth as Household Words."
> *Henry V*, Act IV, Sc. iii.

which would hardly fit. We cannot tell whether this was a mistake (a very natural one), or whether Boz knew it, and did not care about the matter, shaping the line to suit his purpose. I do not think the alteration has been pointed out hitherto.

The "Articles of Agreement" were dated March 28th, 1850. It was stated that the parties concerned had "projected and were about to establish a new weekly periodical, under the name of *Household Words*, in consideration of the mutual trust and confidence they repose in each other." Dickens was to be editor with control over the literary department, the rates of payment, and orders for payment; he was to receive £500 as remuneration for his services as editor and for any literary articles he may contribute, such sum to be paid weekly, monthly or otherwise as he may choose: in addition to any profits, to which as a proprietor he may be entitled. Bradbury and Evans were to be printers and publishers and general managers, and also to direct "the commercial department"; all contracts were to be entered into by them on behalf of the co-partnership; all the books to be provided at their expense, and to be open for the inspection of their partners at the office. They were to furnish all the capital necessary for current expenses, which was to be repaid them out of the yearly amount. In consideration of an eighth share, Forster was to furnish articles without remuneration. Wills was not to withdraw except on giving twelve months' notice. The editor had, however, power to dismiss him, on six months' notice, or by payment of an equivalent salary. Each proprietor was to indemnify the others from all private debts, actions, etc.; neither of the parties was to sell or assign his share or interest without first offering it to his partners. It was to be valued by referees, and in case of their disagreeing by an umpire. If such arrangement were rejected, it might then be sold to an approved person. Meetings of the proprietors were to be held twice in the year, two to make a quorum. Accounts were to be furnished at each half-yearly meeting. In case of the decease of a proprietor, his executors were to take his place. In case of the expiration of *Household Words*, either by agreement or otherwise, all the stock, chattels, etc., were to be sold by auction, unless it were otherwise agreed. *In case of any difference or dispute between the Proprietors, touching the construction of these presents, or any covenant, clause, etc., or anything whatsoever in any wise concerning the said publication, the same shall, on application in writing, be submitted to the* *arbitration of two persons nominated by each of the parties within twenty-one days of the notice given.* On a refusal, the other party may name an arbitrator." On these important clauses a good deal was to turn, when some years later a dispute arose between the partners. These last clauses I have italicised, as future litigation was destined to arise on this construction.

Forster had serious work of his own to attend to in the direction of his newspaper *The Examiner.* We are not surprised, therefore, to find him later on withdrawing from the undertaking. His eighth share was valued at £1,100, and it was to be offered to him at that price, which sum he was to be called on as a matter of form to pay. Failing this payment it was to be considered forfeited, and was to be disposed of as the proprietors should think fit. It would seem from this that he had not actually put any money into the concern, but had given his name with a promise of contributions. Of this one-eighth share one half was allotted to Wills.* The capital of the concern appears to have been not more than £9,000.

It was also intended as a sort of attraction for the new journal that there should be a review of the events of the month under the title of "The Household Narrative of Current Events." There was nothing very original in this, as something of the kind had been done in the *New Monthly,* and in the "Chronicle" of *The Annual Register.* This department was allotted to Forster, and he furnished a substantial portion.

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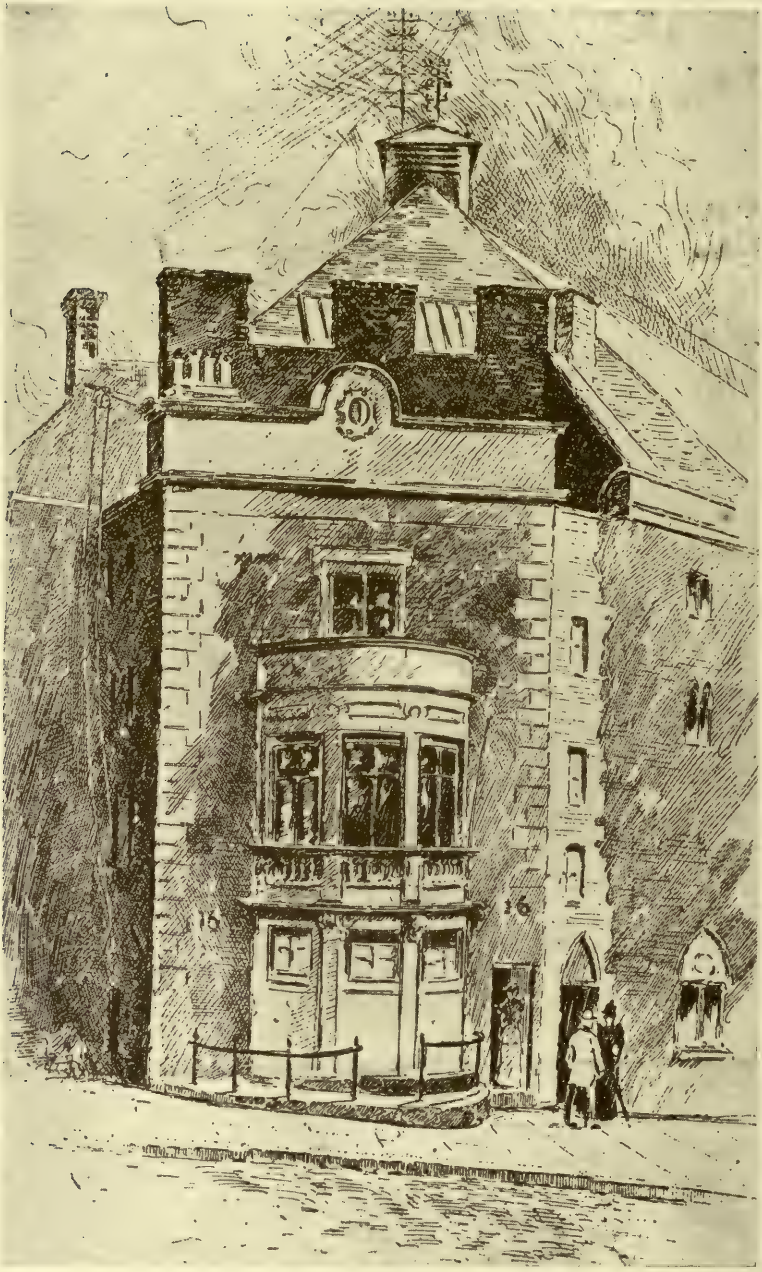
* I find a memorandum in Dickens's handwriting to the effect that one-half of the share should be given to Wills, "so long as he shall remain sub-editor, and Dickens shall live. Should Wills leave or die, Dickens was to have the power of bestowing it on another sub-editor, exercising his own discretion, as he may think most advantageous to the interest of *Household Words,* and the efficiency of his own connection with it." On the death of Dickens, the share was to be the property of his successors in the proprietorship, and of the other proprietors.



"HOUSEHOLD WORDS" OFFICE,
No. 16 Wellington Street, Strand.

But this soon attracted the attention of the Stamp Office authorities, who insisted on classing the journal as a newspaper, and that it should bear a stamp. I can almost hear my old friend vehemently branding this unreasonable claim as "The vilest and most *in—tol—erable* oppression!" Dickens resisted with spirit; the matter was brought before the courts, and finally—but not for some years—decided in his favour. But by and by he found it convenient to discontinue it. I don't think it was very much cared for. Moreover, there was something incongruous in yoking a Chronicle of that kind to a work of fancy. Everyone, too, would remember the events of the past months, they were too fresh to be read over again.

The old original *Household Words* office was a graceful, highly-inviting, *dainty* little structure. It really seemed somewhat in keeping with the brilliant owner, and even with his genial, sympathetic character. It stood half-way up Wellington Street (north in those days), Strand, about half a dozen houses from York Street on the right-hand side as you looked from the Strand, and was number 16. It was but a miniature sort of building, but sufficed. Exceedingly pretty was the bowed front, the bow reaching up for one story, and a ground floor window, each giving a flood of light, quite necessary for literary work. It seemed more a residence suited, as the auctioneer would say, for "a bachelor of position." As you looked from the other side of the street you could see well through the windows that the "drawing-room floor," where the master sat, was handsomely furnished.

This little office had seen varied fortunes before it reached its newer dignity. Charles Kent used to recall how in his adventurous days he, with an ally,

E. L. Blanchard, chose it as their office, where they set up an odd journal, *The Astrologer*, intended to compete with the then popular *Zadkiel.* Like the seer, they "cast nativities" and foretold events. *The Astrologer*, of course, passed away after a short career, and then resigned its place to *Household Words.*

No. 16, Wellington Street has suffered many changes since Boz's occupation. This first office was not very far from the bottom of the street, but the whole block that faced the Lyceum Theatre has been all swept away, the *Morning Post* absorbing the rest. Catherine Street too has disappeared altogether, also devoured by the *Morning Post.* Gone also is the old Gaiety Theatre which touched Boz's office and was built by one of the writers in the little paper, the enterprising "Jack" Hollingshead, who was clever in all things and successful in most. The old *All The Year Round* office at the corner of York Street has now come into the possession of "*a sundries man*," who offers every form of Covent Garden produce. The name would have tickled Boz.

Household Words, though issued weekly, was virtually a monthly magazine, like *Chambers's Journal*, for most subscribers found it more convenient to have the weekly parts thus put together, and they had beside more substantial reading. The popular shilling magazine was then undreamed of. There was the veteran *Blackwood* at half a crown—rather leaden reading—while for some others, such as *Colburn's*, three and sixpence was charged, a monstrous price for so ephemeral a thing. Besides the chronicle of events, there was issued for a time an *Almanack*, but this, like the chronicle, was soon discontinued.

It is only when contrasting *Household Words* with its penny or three-halfpenny contemporaries that we see at once what a new and original thing it was. *Chambers's* always opened (as it still does) with a pleasantly discursive essay, critical or reflective, followed by short tales, descriptions of places and processes, or what might be called " Information." The Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (" confusion of useful knowledge," as some cynics had it) was entirely utilitarian ; the style was plain and practical, not to say bald, and it was well illustrated. It was like a weekly newspaper. In all the " monthlies " tales long or short, serials, etc., and travelling sketches were the staple. We may therefore imagine, when the most brilliant man of letters came along and presented his new miscellany, full of variety and his own personality, with all his own thoughts, opinions, feelings, with, also, his *inspiration* of others, with its new surprising elements, the general jubilee with which it was welcomed.

CHAPTER IX

FIRST ISSUE OF "HOUSEHOLD WORDS." EARLY NUMBERS.

On Saturday, March 30th, 1850, the first number of the *Household Words* was issued. The Editor introduced it to his readers by a very winning and effective address, which he called

"A PRELIMINARY WORD.

"The name that we have chosen for this publication expresses, generally, the desire we have at heart in originating it.

"We aspire to live in the Household affections, and to be numbered among the Household thoughts, of our readers. We hope to be the comrade and friend of many thousands of people, of both sexes, and of all ages and conditions, on whose faces we may never look. We seek to bring into innumerable homes, from the stirring world around us, the knowledge of many social wonders, good and evil, that are not calculated to render any of us less ardently persevering in ourselves, less tolerant of one another, less faithful in the progress of mankind, less thankful for the privilege of living in the summer-dawn of time.

"No mere utilitarian spirit, no iron binding of the mind to grim realities, will give a harsh tone to our Household Words. In the bosoms of the young and old, of the well-to-do and of the poor, we would tenderly cherish that light of Fancy which is inherent in the human breast; which, according to its nurture, burns with an inspiring flame, or sinks into a sullen glare, but which (or woe betide that day!) can never be extinguished. To show to all, that in all familiar things, even in those which are repellent on the surface, there is Romance enough, if we will find it out; to teach the hardest workers at this whirling wheel of toil, that their lot is not necessarily a moody, brutal fact, excluded from the sympathies and graces of imagination; to bring the greater and the lesser in degree, together, upon that wide field, and mutually dispose them to a better acquaintance and a kinder understanding, is one main object of our Household Words.

"The mightier inventions of this age are not to our thinking all material, but have a kind of souls in their stupendous bodies which may find expression in Household Words. The traveller whom we accompany on his railroad or his steamboat journey, may gain, we hope, some compensation for incidents which these later generations have outlived, in new associations with the Power that bears him onward; with the habitations and the ways of life of crowds of his fellow-creatures among whom he passes like the wind; even with the towering chimneys he may see, spirting out fire and smoke upon the prospect. The swart giants, slaves of the Lamp of Knowledge, have their thousand and one tales, no less than the genii of the East; and these, in all their wild, grotesque, and fanciful aspects, in all their many phases of endurance, in all their many moving lessons of compassion and consideration, we design to tell.

"Our Household Words will not be echoes of the present time alone, but of the past too. Neither will they treat of the hopes, the enterprises, triumphs, joys, and sorrows, of this country only, but, in some degree, of those of every nation upon earth. For nothing can be a source of real interest in one of them, without concerning all the rest.

"We have considered what an ambition it is to be admitted into many homes with affection and confidence; to be regarded as a friend by children and old people; to be thought of in affliction and in happiness; to people the sick room with airy shapes 'that give delight and hurt not,' and to be associated with the harmless laughter and the gentle tears of many hearths. We know the great responsibility of such a privilege; its vast reward; the pictures that it conjures up, in hours of solitary labour, of a multitude moved by one sympathy; the solemn hopes which it awakens in the labourer's breast, that he may be free from self-reproach in looking back at last upon his work, and that his name may be remembered in his race in time to come, and borne by the dear objects of his love with pride. The hand that writes these faltering lines, happily associated with *some* Household Words before to-day, has known enough of such experiences to enter in an earnest spirit upon this new task, and with an awakened sense of all that it involves.

"Some tillers of the field into which we now come, have been before us, and some are here whose high usefulness we readily acknowledge, and whose company it is an honour to join. But, there are others here—Bastards of the Mountain, draggled fringe on the Red Cap, Panders to the basest passions of the lowest natures—whose existence is a national reproach. And these, we should consider it our highest service to displace.

"Thus, we begin our career! The adventurer in the old fairy story, climbing towards the summit of a steep eminence on which the object of his search was stationed, was surrounded by a roar of voices, crying to him, from the stones in the way, to turn back. All the voices *we* hear, cry 'Go on!' The stones that call to us have sermons in them, as the trees have tongues, as there are books in the running brooks, as there is good in everything! They, and the Time, cry out to us 'Go on!' With a fresh heart, a light step, and a hopeful courage, we begin the journey. The road is not so rough that it need daunt our feet: the way is not so steep that we need stop for breath, and, looking faintly down, be stricken motionless. 'Go on,' is all we hear, 'Go on!' In a glow already, with the air from yonder height upon us, and the inspiriting voices joining in this acclamation, we echo back the cry, and go on cheerily."

Now it would be difficult to read this graceful, stirring appeal without feeling once more the extraordinary personality of the writer. Into this "prospectus," as moderns would call it, he seemed to put his whole heart—the principles which he had been urging in his writing, his longings to bring light and hope into the cheerless life of the poor and drudging; for his faith was that if money and relief could not be given, something at least that would take their thoughts off their situation would be of service. This is, indeed, not one of the usual addresses before the curtain, issued by some "perky" editor—insincere, full of pledges and promises, and like a shop window, offering earnest of wares not yet within, but to be produced later. There are many striking touches and some tender notes in it. Witness that moving passage: "The pictures that it conjures up in hours of solitary labour, of a multitude moved by one sympathy; the solemn hopes which it awakens in the labourer's breast, that he may be free from self-reproach in looking back at last upon his work, and that his name may be remembered in his race in time to come, and borne by the dear objects of his love and pride. The hand that writes these faltering lines, happily associated with *some* Household Words before to-day, has known enough of such experiences to enter in an earnest spirit upon this new task." It is this personal tone that always endeared Dickens to his readers. At the same time there is a sort of heroic strain, as though our Editor took up the burden with solemn seriousness and with a sense of deep responsibility. There is also a good deal that seems rhapsodical; and certainly passages that are not altogether intelligible. This might amuse did we not feel that he was infinitely and thoroughly in grim earnest. His heart was to be in the business.

In the opening numbers the *piéce de resistance* was the chapters of a short serial story, "Lizzie Leigh," written by Mrs. Gaskell, who then and for many years to come enjoyed great popularity as a story-teller. There were stirring dramatic tales, descriptions of foreign places, humorous travels and comments, national characteristics, with occasional carefully-selected poetry. Here were some of the earlier topics: "Zoological Sessions," "The Subscription List," "Atlantic Waves," "The Irish Stationers," "German Adventure," "Mr. van Ploos on Penmanship," "Gossip about Brussels," "The Good Hippopotamus," "The Irish use of the Globe," "Adventures of a Translation," "Spider's

Silk," "A German Picture of the Scotch," "A Poor Man's Tale of a Patent," etc. Here are more taken at random: "Nobody, Somebody and Everybody," "My Spinster's Proposals for a National Jest Book," "A Plated Article" (that is on Sheffield wares), "China, with a flaw in it," "Justice to the Hyæna," "Received a Blank Cheque," "More work for the Ladies," "Dead Reckoning at the Morgue," "Idiots Again," "Our Coachman," "The Art of Boreing," "Missing a Married Gentleman," "A Canny Book," "Humbugs."

It is difficult not to feel a sort of exhilaration or to fail to catch some of his good spirits as we turn over the pages of an early volume. Bright news and liveliness meet us at every turn. It lives, and the Editor lives in it between its covers. The titles of the papers and the subjects these titles introduce are suggestive and inviting, nor are they mere "dead apples," artificially fashioned and disappointing. They are really the pith of the article itself, happily summarised by a witty man. They betokened the tone, the view taken of everything. The subjects, too, were singularly tempting and inviting. Pleasant was the parody of the *Arabian Nights*, with its characters Mistaspeeka and Hansardadade, while "Transported for Life" was an unaffected personal account, of absorbing interest, related by one who had suffered that penalty. Every short story introduced was carefully planned for effect, so as to contain something novel or "sensational," and over all was cast a tone of elegant pleasantry. The personality of the Editor was everywhere: it was Dickens himself either finding or suggesting the subjects, or touching them, garnishing them here and there with lively strokes, suggesting alteration, or adding a lively, expressive title, and finally, with great art, arranging and selecting the papers, so as to produce the best effect on the reader. No editor of our time attempts this sort of thing, perhaps because no editor has a personality as Dickens had.

To Forster he would in his buoyant, enthusiastic fashion give note of his vast and various projects for *Household Words.* One was a series of occasional papers, to be called "The Member for Nowhere," setting out the views, votes and speeches of such a person. "He is a member of the Government, of course. The moment they found such a member in the House they felt that he must be dragged by force, if necessary, into the Cabinet." This scheme he laid aside reluctantly; but the idea was not lost. We were to have it later in the Circumlocution Office. He also spoke of a bright notion, a fine little bit of satire, "The Thousand and One Humbugs," with new versions of the best-known stories. Forster thinks that this notion was also given up, but one paper of the series at least appeared. The Editor himself supplied essays and sketches with frequency, particularly on subjects connected with abuses of government or administration, where he felt the grievance acutely, these being easily recognisable from their sarcastic and vehement tone.

It is curious to note one of the methods of this interesting man for stimulating his invention. "I took my threatened walk last night," he wrote to Wills in April, 1851, "but it yielded little but generalities. However, I have thought of something for *to-night* that I think will make a splendid paper. This is it, 'A Night in a Station-house.'"

The success of the venture was extraordinary, nearly one hundred thousand copies of the first number having been sold. Nor was this surprising. For here there was everything to attract — a pleasing, interesting journal, admirably edited, varied, new in style and treatment. Above all, there was the magician, the gifted Editor himself, and his influence revealed everywhere. There was the friendly greeting of his name at the top of every page, "Conducted by Charles Dickens."* The truth is, it is difficult at the present moment to realise how great his supreme position was then. Every eye was turned to him! He was practically alone, not above everyone else by his head and shoulders merely, but by full figure. Nowadays, the rule is divided among a great many. But Dickens in letters had somewhat the position of Gladstone in politics. He was a force, a power, a romantic figure. Anything by Dickens, a letter, a paper, an opinion, was sought out, talked over and devoured, and people were eager to know what he thought on any and every subject. *Household Words*, a mere twopenny journal, was to be found on every table and in every room, in the palace and the cottage. It may be doubted if people would now pay twopence a week to learn the opinions of our best novelist on any subject whatever.†

There was an immense "retail business," the magazine being issued each week, and each month in parts. We may, I think, assume that Bradbury and Evans undertook the accounts and similar details, and also the general distribution. Dickens had, of course, to make himself familiar with all the publishing details, and was not the man to shirk any trouble.

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* There was a pleasant jest afloat in reference to the Editor's profession tha the journal was to be quite anonymous in its character. "So I see," said a wit, "for I see Charles Dickens's name on every page."

† The first number contained these papers:—"A Preliminary Word," by Dickens and Wills; "Abraham, the Fire-worshipper," by Leigh Hunt; "Amusements for the People," Dickens; "Clairon," George Hogarth; "Verses," by Allingham; and a paper by Mrs. Chisholm, "The Philanthropist."

By July he was encouraged to write to his friend White: "*Household Words* goes on *thoroughly well.* It is expensive no doubt, and demands a large circulation: but it is taking a great and steady stand, and I have no doubt already yields a good round profit." This was cheering; but a sort of *detachment* will be noted, as though the responsibility was on others, contrasting with his later serious interest in the venture.

His nicety and delicacy of touch can be shown by one instance. He was concerned about the mere look or sound of the various titles of articles, such as "The Amusements of the People," which he altered from that of "Amusements of the People." For he said drolly enough that he "would as soon have his hair cut off as have an intolerable Scotch shortness put into my titles by an elision of little words." He always displayed a wonderful tact or *flaire* in such trifles. But "I really *can't* promise to be comic," he said, as his friend wished him to be. "I will shake my head a little, and see if I can shake a more comic substitute out of it. As to *two* comic articles, or two of any sort of articles out of me, that 's the intensest extreme of no-goism." To his assistant and friend Wills he always wrote in cheerfullest strain, expending on him his quips and good things. Many would have been economical and have confined themselves strictly to business. But the genial Dickens never made such distinctions, and really wrote with the same sparkle and effort to his own family and his dependents, just as though he were addressing official friends.

There was quite a special form of article, of which legions were to follow, supplying skilful and even dramatic accounts of the various social operations going on around us—manufactures, organisations. These, like Mr. Stiggins's "moral pocket-handkerchiefs," "blended instruction with amusement." First-hand and special information was almost always secured, and naturally, owing to Boz's high position and popularity. Thus he would deal with "The Amusements of the People," on which he commented in his own characteristic manner, and could be satirical and severe, didactic and amusing. This again was a special feature, and was present hereafter whenever the occasion called. Here was teacher, reformer and entertainer, and the pleasant host of his public. We can thus even catch through the many volumes the *personal* note. A story of Clairon, the French actress, was also another type, a favourite one, something curious from old English or French literature served with a *sauce piquante* (this specimen was by his father-in-law). Finally came a paper of "Emigrants' Letters," a subject after his own heart and a supremely interesting one. Such miscellanies were often sent to him.

Dickens's truly affectionate and even romantic interest in the tender recollections of his childhood and family is shown in his paper "A Child's Dream of a Star," which appeared in the second number of the Journal in 1850. He clearly wished to emphasise this feeling by making the account as prominent as possible, and to show that it was all-important to him. It is a most graphic reminiscence, and written with his most delicate touch. In a truly delightful and even pathetic fashion he wrote to Forster enclosing the manuscript. This was in March of the year. Only the first number of his Journal was ready, and he had noted a lack of "tenderness" in the second. "Coming down in the railway the other night (always a wonderfully suggestive place to me when I am alone) I was looking at the stars. I was revolving a little idea about them, and then put the two ideas together." The child was his sister Fanny, who had died but a couple of years before, and with whom he used to wander into the Chatham Churchyard of nights and look at the stars. There is something very touching in this, which shows what deep wells of sympathy and affection were in his tender nature, and how precious to him were these rare family recollections and dreams. It is clear that even by this time we hardly knew the mysteries of his highly-sensitive character, and how earnest he was in treasuring up in some form these rare and inestimable thoughts. This and many more such recorded impressions must be taken account of in dealing with his life and feelings.

The little paper shows an almost poignant sense of grief and desolation, and we may look in vain in other more official accounts of his life for anything like this proof of his sensibility and affectionate disposition. As we have seen, he had lost this darling sister a short time before, and he turned back to the old childish days as a relief. He indulged the hope of rejoining her, and in many pathetic fancies imagines her asking, as others of the family are taken away and arrive, "Is it my brother?" The mother, sister and others die off, but the child is shown still asking for the brother.

The writer had no scruple in thus uncloaking his tender feelings, especially as he knew all would take it as a mere imagination, and it should be noted that all through in this secret crypt of his he found pleasure in putting on record little incidents of his own life, family sufferings and feelings, and thus giving them a permanence. These old thoughts and memories were his one cherished store and treasure to be fostered carefully and constantly recorded.

It was wonderful how Boz, who had not given much attention to editorship, should have been not merely successful, but strikingly so, in this attempt. He seemed to the manner born. Nothing can be more admirable than the balance of the papers in each number, and the happy way in which they were contrasted. This must have entailed excessive labour and the most painstaking exertions. When I myself came to have a large share in the work I saw by the state of the proofs that were sent what extraordinary labour was involved. Often and often the long slips became a network of blue strokes and interpolations and deletions. As he introduced a contribution of his own at least once a month, one may wonder what became of these innumerable original manuscripts, which must have been counted by hundreds. I am afraid they were torn up and carelessly destroyed. His subeditor, on my asking him this question, told me that they were invariably collected in the printing office, sealed up, and returned to him. No doubt he required this to prevent their being sold or getting into other hands, and when he got them back he probably tore them up. They certainly do not exist. Little did he think what a treasure he was destroying, or that nowadays they would bring literally enormous sums.

Then came the first of his delightful accounts of manufactures, explained in pleasant, almost humorous terms—a system of his own.

All through these early numbers we recognise his touch, with his favourite earnest pleading in " Our

School," "At Home and Abroad," "A Coroner's Inquest," "Music in Humble Life," etc. (evidently to "give a lift to his old friend Hullah"), "A Popular Delusion" (*i.e.* about Billinsgate, perhaps), "My Wonderful Adventures in Skitzland," "New Lamps for Old Ones," "Royal Rotten Row Commission" (a pleasant bit of satire on official commissions, certainly his, being after the fashion of the Circumlocution Office). "The Old Lady in Threadneedle Street" was, I believe, the first of my old friend, John Hollingshead's financial contributions, and excellent they were.

On July 13th we find the first of the detective papers, "The Modern Science of Thief taking," followed by the "Detective Police Party at the Office," and others. These latter he reprinted in the collected pieces, but, oddly enough, he suppressed the first, though it is as good as the others. This was founded on quite a new system, now, however, grown into fashion, that of "interviewing," with a difference, however; for he would work up the interview with lively and comic touches all his own.

The Editor's minute and painstaking supervision is shown by a significant comment, written in 1851:—"I have been looking over the back numbers. Wherever they fail it is in wanting elegance of fancy. They lapse too much into a dreary, arithmetical, Cocker-cum-Walkingame dustyness that is powerfully depressing." This shows how difficult he found it to maintain the fanciful, imaginative standard he had set up originally; but the forms and pressure of his time seemed too strong for him, as was soon to be shown by the contrast between the old and later treatment. By and by the descent into wholly "practical" methods was to be reached.

The Editor and his assistant often joined in the production of a single paper, such as "A Plated Article," an account of the Sheffield ware, where Wills worked up the details of manufacture and Boz supplied the fancy treatment. In their collected miscellanies the same paper is often found in both of their collected miscellanies and claimed by each writer. Wills could write effectively after the rather "machine-made" pattern required by the journal. Many times was another party called in to make a third, Henry Morley, a sort of deputy sub-editor of immense use, in fact a kind of "handy man." I knew him very well. He was an admirable dramatic critic, and his volume of "notices" are a perfect grammar of dramatic knowledge. He was presently advanced to be professor in one of the Universities.

Boz was fond of devising typical characters to figure in his Journal, with whom he played in amusing fashion and worked with his own humorous strings. Such was "Mr. Whelks," a representative of the common middle-class observer, whom he took with him to East End theatres, and whose platitudes he delighted to record. Another of these beings was "Mr. Booley"—happy name!—the great traveller, whom he ridiculed in the most pleasant fashion. In his regular novels he could have made much of these personages. Indeed, once talking with me over Mrs. Lirriper, he exclaimed rather wistfully, "The waste of these Christmas supplements is perfectly dreadful. In one of my regular stories I could have done immense things with Mrs. Lirriper!" "Mr. Whelks," who was not so distinctly outlined as to live a long life, soon faded out, as did his companion, Mr. Booley.

Boz's righteous wrath against quacks and social evil-doers often betrayed him into a state of vehemence which was highly entertaining. He used to take a certain pose on such occasions. For instance, there was a luckless magistrate who made in public a depreciatory remark on an Englishman as compared with a German. He gave the victim a tremendous and scathing "trouncing," and headed his article, "The Awful Mr. Hall." It recalls his former scourging of the tyrannical Lang.

But there was another electric motor which supplied a force to Dickens's writing, and which he was unique in using. This was the autobiographical element. He might be said to have invented this character of a pleasant, shrewd observer (such as he himself was), with a lively fancy of a humorous turn, going round and about, seeing oddities and queer things where others saw nothing, embroidering them with odd fancies. He was one of the greatest and most acute of observers, and he put into his books all that had happened to himself in his life—all his thoughts, feelings, humours—so that if by any chance all the fifteen or sixteen biographies of him were destroyed or submerged in some convulsion we could almost reconstruct his whole life and adventures out of his writings.

This first volume, then, becomes of extraordinary interest from the abundance of his recollections and feelings therein detailed. And here it should be noted that he could write best and with the most originality and entertainment when he furnished his own impressions, recollections and feelings, for here was reality and here life. Thus we have a picture of his stay in his favourite Broadstairs; "Our School"—vivid reminiscences of his boyhood. His journey to Paris in "A

Flight;" a description of an old and dear friend who had just died; an account of his life at Boulogne. "Out of Town;" life at an English seaport. "Out of the Season;" another seaport.

Already his romantic associations with Rochester—dear to him always, from his childish recollections—began to come back on him. He longed to introduce them and make others share in his interest. He supplied to this little city a renewed vitality and dramatic significance—the Cathedral, the Eastgate House, the Watts's Charity have life and soul infused into them. But his pen has done yet more for it in the way of social reform. His sarcastic denouncing of the abuses in and ministering of a Charity at Rochester actually led to a complete reconstruction. There was one institution which he took in hand, and where a monstrous system prevailed. It was a local grammar school, with a foundation of large funds unscrupulously applied. These were in the hands of the Dean and Canons of "St. Rochford," who took not the least trouble about the school. Boz, in one of his most sarcastic articles, gives an almost amusing picture of the spoliation—how a room was believed to have taken shape as the stable of one of the Canons, who seem to have fairly divided the plunder among themselves. At last the old-fashioned master died, and a new one of quite a different sort, whom Dickens calls Mr. Hardhead, succeeded. This gentleman began to look into matters, searching out the old deeds, and gradually tracing the funds. He then boldly demanded not only a share, but actual restitution, to the horror of Dean and Canons. Then a pamphlet was published; the matter was debated in the House of Commons, but somehow the Dean and his friends succeeded in baffling all attempts. The courageous master left the place, but still carried on his war, and it was at this juncture that Boz stepped in with his powerful and amusing *exposé*. In due course right prevailed.*

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* It is not quite certain that Boz wrote the article, but he certainly directed and inspired it.

CHAPTER X

THE "EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBERS." GEORGE CRUIKSHANK. DICKENS'S METHOD OF EDITING. A "CHILD'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND." AMONG THE EARLY VOLUMES.

It is most interesting to seek out what was the reason of the deep-seated, passionate longing after Christmas feeling which dominated Charles Dickens for the better portion of his life. It is quite an unusual thing in one of so practical a turn of mind as was our author. In his buoyant, even "rollicking" *Pickwick*, we find him introducing his love for old Christmas associations. The passage is thoroughly genuine in its earnestness and feeling:—

> "We write these words now, many miles distant from the spot at which, year after year, we met on that day, a merry and joyous circle. Many of the hearts that throbbed so gaily then have ceased to beat; many of the looks that shone so brightly then have ceased to glow; the hands we grasped have grown cold; the eyes we sought have hid their lustre in the grave; and yet the old house, the room, the merry voices and smiling faces, the jest, the laugh, the most minute and trivial circumstances connected with those happy meetings, crowd upon our mind at each recurrence of the season, as if the last assemblage had been but yesterday! Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days; that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth; that

can transport the sailor and the traveller, thousands of miles away, back to his own fireside and his quiet home!"

Who can forget in the 'fifties, when the spell was working, the tide of picture papers with their riotous scenes of revelry—the carrier arriving with Christmas game, the feastings in the old hall, the schoolboys returning home, the outcast looking in at the window while the family feast was rife within, the snow-bound coach, the "returning home from the Christmas party," the snowballing, the "first morning on the ice"; all these were set forth in gaudy colouring, then quite a novelty. Choice artists displayed their talent in really artistic pictures as though well inspired by the season. S. Read, with his fine baronial halls and moated granges (a clever "Moated Granger," as it was called), was in great demand; there was Slader and many more of good repute; supplements, double numbers abounded, all overflowing with these subjects. It was impossible to resist the genial influence of these things. I myself, an enthusiastic devotee, used to look forward wistfully to the arrival of these treasures, and to this hour have carefully treasured all these Christmas numbers, which with each recurring anniversary I take out on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and enjoy a right royal feast of retrospection, yet half sad also. In these things were found some charming songs written by Bishop, who had written music for Scott's dramas, then living, and others, which have the genuine Christmas flavour.

All the cult was owing to the touch of the magician. It was amazing how he worked on the theme, what variety and dramatic feeling he infused into it, how systematically he carried it out, and how the public never seemed to tire of the subject. That exquisite and perfect chrysolite, the *Christmas Carol*, secured all to him for ever, it is so genuine, so full of heart and feeling. To this hour there are thousands who read it of a Christmas Eve, and even the most Scrooge-like heart will find itself under the spell. In his Journal from the first he had put forth tentatively a few charming little essays such as, "What Christmas is as we grow older"; but he presently began to issue the regular "Christmas Number," a series of charming, fanciful things, frameworks for stories by other hands. Such were "The Holly Tree Inn," and the "Wreck of the Golden Mary" and suchlike, in which I had my share. These by and by became quite "machine-made" things as it were, and the old Christmas faith began to wane. Alas! for the sad day when he found his faith failing and the old feeling dried up. "These old Christmas 'properties' have been worked to death," he might have said to himself, "I am sick of them, so is the public—and I have really *said* all that can be said." And so after his return from the States he announced that he had furnished the last of these papers.

Yet this Christmas feeling and faith was no fancy or whim, it was really a part of himself, and bound up with the old child's memories which were so dear to him, and which he kept in a cabinet as it were, to be taken out and looked at lovingly. I firmly believe that in his early Rochester days he had some happy delightful scenes to look back to, some families that lived at Maidstone, *aliter* Dingley Dell, where some exquisite Christmas revels would take place. Happy days that he never forgot. It may be repeated that this strong, nay, overpowering Christmas dream was with him for many years, colouring a large section of his life, and that its influence spread far beyond the festival itself and its joys, and helped to intensify many pleasing emotions and tender memories.*

The yearly custom was to contrive "a framework" suitably to hold five or six stories, and an outline of this plot was sent out to likely writers. The Christmas number of 1856 was prepared for by a sort of circular sent round to a select number of contributors, and is in itself a characteristic bit of the master's writing. The number was to be called *The Wreck of the "Golden Mary."*

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* Dickens's individual papers on this subject so near to his heart were :—

1850. "A Christmas Tree."

1851. "What Christmas is as we Grow Older."

1852. "The Poor Relation's Story," "The Child's Story."

1853. "The Schoolboy's Story," "Nobody's Story."

1854. "The Old City of Rochester," "The Story of Richard Doubledick," "The Road," in *The Seven Poor Travellers.*

1855. "Myself," "Boots at the Holly Tree Inn," "The Bill," in *The Holly Tree Inn.*

1856. "The Wreck," in *The Wreck of the "Golden Mary."*

1857. "The Island of Silver Store," "The Rafts on the River," in *The Perils of certain English Prisoners.*

1858. "Going into Society," in *A House to Let.*

1859. "The Mortals in the House," "The Ghost in Master B.'s Room," in *The Haunted House.*

1860. "The Village," "The Money," "The Restitution," in *A Message from the Sea.*

1861. "Picking up Soot and Cinders," "Picking up Miss Kimmeens," "Picking up the Timber," in *Tom Tiddler's Ground.*

1862. "His leaving it till called for," "His Boots," "His Brown Paper Parcel," "His Wonderful End," in *Somebody's Luggage.*

1863. "How Mrs. Lirriper carried on the Business," "How the Parson added a Few Words," in *Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings.*

1864. "Mrs. Lirriper relates how she went on and went over," "Mrs. Lirriper relates how Tommy topped up," in *Mrs. Lirriper's Legacy.*

1865. "To be Taken Immediately," "To be Taken for Life," "The Trial," in *Dr. Marigold's Prescriptions.*

1866. "Barbox Brothers," "Barbox Brothers and Co," "The Main Line," "The Boy Mugby," No. 1 in *Mugby Junction.*

"An English trading ship (with passengers on board), bound for California, is supposed to have got foul of an iceberg, and becomes a wreck. The crew and passengers not being very many in number, and the captain being a cool man with his wits about him, one of the boats was hoisted out, and some stores were got over the side into her before the ship went down. Then all hands, with a few exceptions, were got into the boat—an open one—and they got clear of the wreck and put their trust in God.

"The captain set the course and steered, and the rest rowed by spells when the sea was smooth enough for the use of the oars. They had a sail besides. At sea in the open boat for many days and nights, with the prospect before them of being swamped by any great wave, or perishing with hunger, the people in the boat began after a while to be horribly dispirited. The captain, remembering that the narration of stories had been attended with great success on former occasions in similar disasters in preventing the shipwrecked persons' minds from dwelling on the horrors of their conditions, proposed that such as could tell anything to the rest should tell it. So the stories are introduced.

"The adventures narrated need not of necessity have happened in all cases to the people in the boat themselves; neither does it matter whether they are told in the first or in the third person. The whole narrative of the wreck will be given by the captain to the reader in introducing the stories, also the final deliverance of the people. There are persons of both sexes in the boat. The writer of any story may suppose any sort of person, or none, if that be all, as the captain will identify him if need be. But among the wrecked there might naturally be the mate, the cook, the carpenter, the armourer (or worker in iron), the boy, the bride passenger, the bridegroom passenger, the sister passenger, the brother passenger, the mother or father passenger, or son or daughter passenger, the runaway passenger, the child passenger, the old seaman, the toughest of the crew, etc., etc."

Here were the skeleton and ribs of *The Wreck of the "Golden Mary,"* which had extraordinary success, though some critics were merry on the idea of the suffering passengers having to listen to such long narratives, one adding that he wondered that it did not precipitate the catastrophe.

The long charm of Christmas association was carried through a period of over thirty years, from *Dingley Dell* in 1837 to *No Thoroughfare*, when the fashion flickered out. One of the industrious *chiffoniers* we are now so familiar with might fashion an encyclopædia of Christmas description from his works.

I return now to the ordinary course of the journal, and recall how, at times, Boz would break out in his own defence with a sort of fantastic indignation, and his satirical strokes gave much enjoyment.

Thus an article appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* on "The License of Modern Novelists," in which Dickens was severely handled for his attacks on the Circumlocution Office and other public institutions. The collapse of a house in *Bleak House* was obviously suggested to him by a recent fall of houses in Tottenham Court Road; it was an unworthy claptrap. Dickens defended himself in excited fashion on August 1st, 1857. The paper was sarcastically entitled, "Curious Misprint in the *Edinburgh Review.* The name of Mr. Dickens is at the head of these pages, and the hand of Mr. Dickens writes this paper." He proved convincingly that the houses in Tottenham Court Road could have no connection with his story, which was written long before. The *Review* apologized.

His old friend, George Cruikshank, had grotesquely turned some favourite fairy tales to temperance purposes, a subject on which he was in advance of his day, and in relation to which he was thought somewhat of "a crank." This was touching Dickens in a tender place, and he fell on his friend with much severity. The paper was in the number for October 1st, 1853, and called "Frauds on the Fairies." He said that "he had observed with pain the intrusion of a whole hog of unwieldy dimensions into the fairy flower garden," and then proceeded to sketch the fairy tale of *Cinderella* in satirical shape, as George himself might write it, introducing "Juvenile Bands of Hope," and the like. The allusion to "whole hogism" was hardly friendly; but he took such things very earnestly, for they touched all his store of precious romance. Half-seriously, half-playfully, he had written of his purpose to Wills. "I mean to protest most strongly against alteration, for any purpose, of the beautiful little stories which are so tenderly and humanly useful to us in these times, when the world is too much with us early and late; and then to rewrite *Cinderella* according to Total Abstinence, Peace Society, and Bloomer principles, and expressly for their propagation. I shall want his book, *Hop o' my Thumb* (Forster noticed it in the last *Examiner*) and the most simple and popular version of *Cinderella* you can get me."

The touchy George Cruikshank was perhaps already brooding over a grievance, and he was soon to formulate his grotesque charges of plagiarism in the case of *Oliver Twist*. So it was perhaps injudicious of Boz to provoke him. There soon appeared a retort in the shape of a paper, entitled, "A Letter from Hop-o'-my-Thumb to Charles Dickens, Esq.," in Cruikshank's own magazine, in reply to the two articles, "Frauds upon the Fairies" and

"Whole Hogs," in which he rather smartly defends himself.

The critical reader will by this time begin to notice how highly dramatic and original are the incidents that cluster round Boz in the exercise of his new office; but every brilliant, ebullient man can hardly help being dramatic. He makes drama as he goes. Thus here we have two great artists tilting against each other in this highly quaint form of quarrel. This little incident is of value, as it shows how closely Boz clung to all the old tender traditions of childhood, like the "Dream of a Star," "The Miller and His Men," and so on. These were his little treasures which he took out of his memory caskets to look at fondly and dream over. Who will not sympathise with him?

Many a strange tale and incident came to him of an out-of-the-way kind likely to make choice reading, which he was ever eager to welcome, provided that the situations offered were fresh and new. In short, anyone who had really "something to tell" was cordially received. This it was that gave *Household Words* such an air of novelty. It was, of course, always leavened by the professional magazine "hodman," who had, however, to catch as he could the proper tone of the journal.*

Some of the most interesting things were the personal narratives, such as that of an old soldier taken down in his own words almost. Real adventures, escapes and exciting bits of travel, personal tours—all furnished a welcome novelty and variety.

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* So cleverly chosen were the titles of papers, so appetising, as it were, that they in themselves seemed to be a reading of a sort. Who could resist "To hang or not to Hang," "The Worthy Magistrate," "Doctoring begins at Home," "Brides for Sale," "A Tight Little Island," "Mind your Manners," "Shops," "Dolls," "Idiots," "I Give and Bequeath," "Received a Blank Cheque," "Old Clothes," "King Dirt," "Things that cannot be done," "Old Bones," "Blind Sight-seeing," "Our Bore," "Justice to the Hyena," "Thirty Days of Pleasure for Fifteen Francs," "Eyes made to Order," "Jack and the Union Jack."

Nothing could give a better idea of Dickens's clear, business-like methods in arranging the *clerical* details of his office than the following "code" of directions for putting in due order a complicated alteration of proof slips. He was dealing with Mrs. Gaskell's "Dark Night's Work," which had got into a "mess." He was at a distance, so could only give written directions. "Follow me," he says, "with the eye of your mind. The third portion consists of chapters VII and VIII. The fourth portion begins with slip 27. Turn the slips over till you come to the one numbered 32 at end of paragraph 1. After the words 'happened at a sadder time' *insert Chapter X*, which will then begin, 'Before the June roses,' etc. Turn on again till you come to slip 34, and stop at that portion at the end of the first paragraph on it, after the words 'except Dixon,' etc. The fifth portion will begin Chapter XI, 'In a few days Miss Monro obtained.' The story must be in six portions, and I will send you the dividing of the two last to-morrow." Could anything be clearer or even more skilful and *scientific* after the fashion of small things?

He was always considerate and kindly and took the most jealous care not to offend or hurt "classes." Thus, in one of his humorous articles he had been ridiculing the old-fashioned conventionalities of the Théâtre Français, "their formal habits, their regular surprises, surprising nobody; their mysterious disclosures of immense secrets, known to everybody beforehand." But reflecting that this light pleasantry might pain his friend Regnier, who was of that theatre, he destroyed it.

It has always seemed a strange, unaccountable thing that Boz, in addition to his many burdens, should have taken on himself the incongruous task of writing a History of England for Children! It must have entailed much study and dry-as-dust explorings, with the rather laborious cultivation of a juvenile style to suit his young readers. The result, I believe, was hardly satisfactory, for it was not in his line; but the question remains, What drew him to such a subject? unless it were a certain enthusiasm evidenced clearly when he came to describe certain battles. It was odd that his rival Thackeray came to fancy that *he* also was a sort of historian, and made some respectable attempts in the same direction. It is a curious coincidence. Each, however, seemed to do the same things: both had magazines, both lectured, both wrote history, tales and essays. It is, however, to be lamented that he conceived the idea, as it must have been a tremendous recurring burden that robbed him of many a bright fancy. Few, I believe, cared for this Child's History, which was commenced on January 25th, 1851.* And I must confess I never could explain the rather narrow-minded view he always seemed to hold in reference to the obnoxious body which he usually called "the Romish Church." This feeling was really *ingrained* in his fine and otherwise truly tolerant nature. It was perfectly genuine, and may have been owing to his friend Forster's views and sympathies, which had the same hostile complexion.

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* It was later published in three small and pretty volumes, oddly enough rarely found to match, or of the same edition, dedicated to his "own dear children, whom I hope it may help by and by to read with interest larger and better books on the same subject." It was, however, rather prejudiced. An oddity was noted that there were passages in these papers that actually fell into rhythmical shape, such as the account of the Battle of Hastings—

The English broke and fled.
The Normans rallied and the day was lost.
O what a sight beneath the moon and stars!
The lights were shining in the victors' tents,
Pitched near the spot where blinded Harold fell.
Etc., etc.

As a curious proof of the value for Boz-lovers of troublesome search through these interesting records, we shall find in the sixteenth number of Volume I an article called "Dust," a little story based on the history of one of the great dust heaps which were then tolerated about London. Some of the characters are described as searching one of the huge mounds for something that was known to be concealed there. This was discovered at last in the shape of a gold-framed miniature wrapped in a parchment document, on which depended an important pecuniary inheritance. The possessor gained the affections of the daughter of the wealthy man who was the owner of this great dust heap. He gave the lover his choice, offering him the dust heap or twenty thousand pounds down as the lady's portion. The cash down was preferred. Now, this little story must have come back to Boz's mind years later when he was devising the plan of *Our Mutual Friend*, to be developed with much humour. Again, in Number five we come upon "A Coroner's Inquest," a minute and most graphic account of one of these squalid inquiries held at "the Old Drury Tavern, Vinegar Lane." In this all the painful and revolting details are described, which we can well recognise in *Bleak House*. In Volume II we come upon a truly vivacious article, marked with the genuine sign-manual of our conductor, entitled "Red Tape." Nothing more witty or sarcastic can be conceived. He plays with his subject and puts it in every variety of comic light. At once we think of the later "Circumlocution Office," which itself always seemed a rather ponderous circumlocution. Sarcastic, however, as was the treatment of the topic in the story, it may be said beyond doubt that this brilliant article on "Red Tape," sparkling and crackling, has rather more effect than the elaborate and much-drawn-out treatment offered in *Little Dorrit.*

In December, 1850, our Editor found some old and painful memories revived by a visit to the old Queen's Bench or Debtors' Prison, where he discovered cases of oppression worse than those of the Fleet. The old imprisonment for debt had indeed been abolished, but there was the "contempt of Court," an ingenious decree for punishing in the same fashion as the old non-payment of debt. He found out cases of cruel oppression, notably of one who after inheriting under a will was called on to refund what he had legitimately spent, and failing to do so had been imprisoned eight-and-twenty years! Could this be the same "Chancery prisoner" whose pathetic death is recorded in *Pickwick Papers?* though it also recalls the story told to him by another debtor. Boz records other disastrous and piteous cases. He lashed the Court with bitter sarcasm, giving it due credit for releasing a man who had been imprisoned for seventeen years by *mistake!*

Sir Edward Sugden, the brilliant lawyer, came forth to defend the impeached Court in a letter to *The Times.* Dickens was merry over his excuse that the prisoners became so attached to the prison that it was impossible to turn them out! Sir Edward had actually been the author of an Act abolishing this punishment for contempt; but as Boz showed, it was a dead letter, for the eminent lawyer, on a visit to the gaol, actually found twenty-four persons thus imprisoned. It was on the whole a most interesting discussion between two men of such eminence, but it may be conceived that the general sympathy was with the tender-hearted Charles, who had "served time" in that old grinding school.

These old journals suggest many interesting things associated with the director. Witness this. In a letter he had given a direction as to being liberal to one Charles Whitehead—"let the scale go for him." Now, who was this Whitehead? He was the writer of what seems to me a very powerful romance called *Richard Savage*. Not much reputation in that, it will be said, for it is now unread and unknown. But your true Pickwickian will recall the name. Here is an old association with Boz of exceeding interest. For it was Whitehead who nearly thirty years before had been offered the task of writing up to Seymour's Sporting Plates, but on declining had suggested a clever young fellow he wot of—the immortal Charles. What an escape for the public! All Pickwickians ought to set up a tablet to Whitehead's memory.

Under such conditions it was impossible but that this journal, thus inspired and designed, should have proved superior in every particular and, leavened through and through with the one personality—that of a man of genius—should have grown into a most exceptional and unusual miscellany, attractive from every point, above all from this intense *personality;* for every week the popular writer was presenting himself in some pleasant shape. Even now, when we chance upon an old, very early volume, when all was new and fresh, we are detained over it against our will, all but fascinated by the pleasant, entertaining variety of subject and treatment. The eye passes from title to title, and their ingenious suggestiveness is in itself amusing. The short stories, too, are most piquant and original, and the accounts of small industries and manufactures, such as the story of a match or a lump of coal, most instructive. All the while we feel that we are listening to the conductor in person, who is putting things forward in his own brilliant style. He delighted also in registering permanently racy accounts of his own expeditions, where he had enjoyed himself in company with a choice friend and could expend himself in his accustomed *gaieté de cœur*. As in 1851, when he and Forster set off to visit certain abbey ruins in Kent, which he called Pumkinfield, where "a Great Battle was fought." These ruins were the property of a local owner, who exhibited them as a show place, taking huge fees. But this owner fell into bad hands on the occasion in question, and suffered severely, as everyone could recognise him. Forster and he must have enjoyed their visit hugely. Simpson, as he named the proprietor, was covered with "chaff" and ridicule, and the whole scene is described with infinite humour and sarcasm. Indeed, I have often thought what a pleasant little contribution to Boz's biography could be formed if these little piquant incidents were gathered together. Simpson must have writhed as he read, for the paper was now reprinted in the local and hostile journals.

The Dickens dry-as-dusts have found some of their strangest and most frequent quarrys in searching out the *exact* authorship of certain papers—were they by Boz himself or by another, or was he helped? Such debated rarities have fetched "long prices." Witness one specimen:

There was a trifling paper in *Household Words* on St. Luke's Hospital, which Dickens, prompted by his charitable heart and knowing the pecuniary value of a word from him, wished to assist; so with the aid of his sub-editor he put together an artistic appeal under the title of "A Curious Dance Round a Christmas Tree." This was reprinted in a small pamphlet, and in due course became scarce and *recherché*, fetching fancy prices. Why, nobody could say. Wills, it is said, wrote the chief portion, and his chief, in his own clever way, added a paragraph here and there and touched the whole up. This suggests what an amazing fertility this great writer could display, and all his writing was thus bound up with the social movements and workings of his time. He was, in truth, a great motive force, not a mere writer of stories, a master of written language which he could use as a weapon.

CHAPTER XI

DETAILS OF THE EDITING

THUS successfully the new journal pursued its prosperous course. It seemed almost a thing of life, so completely did the genial, gifted Editor identify himself with it. For close on nine or ten years he was to be unsparing of himself and of his labour. He put all his feelings, emotions, humours into it. Every subject was inspired by him, selected by him, altered, moulded according to what he thought should be the spirit of such a journal. Nothing, indeed, is more extraordinary than his nice and delicate scruples as to the suitability of some paper, or incident, or of a passage or passages, the fruit of laborious, conscientious thought. His principle was to stimulate, encourage and direct others, and when there was any flagging of the interest, to "strike in" himself.

After a few numbers had been issued, it became easy to recognise the clear and distinct purpose of the work. Its great aim was to supply information on what are called the "actualities" of surrounding life, to deal with the "business of pleasure" and the pleasures of business; but all was to be presented in a lively, attractive, and ever humorous fashion. The institutions of daily life were made to give up their secrets, manufactures, streets, houses, and so on.

In March, 1853, he was writing to his assistant editor in pleasant style of various unsuitable contributions:

"I am sorry, but Brutus sacrifices unborn children of his own as well as those of other people." 'The Sorrows of Children,' long in type and a mere long mysterious name, must come out. The paper really is, like the celebrated ambassador's appointment, 'too bad.' 'Starting a paper' is very droll to us. But it is full of references that the public don't understand, and don't in the least care for. Bourgeois, brevier, minion, and nonpareil, long primer, turnups, drawing advertisements and reprisals, back forms, imposing stone blocks, etc., are all quite out of their way, and a sort of slang that they have no interest in."

This was sound criticism, and applies to much more than the instance given. Writers too often think that what pleases themselves must please the reader. But a primer of literary instruction could be compiled from Dickens's letters.

From the opening of the journal Boz always kept steadily before his eyes, as a sort of reserve force, the introduction of a serial story, either by himself or by some conspicuous writer. This resource, however, was to be kept for an emergency, in case of some temporary flagging of the interest; but in time it grew to be a regular staple or basis of his arrangements. The idea was no doubt suggested by the French system. Within three or four years, namely, in April, 1854, he had to avail himself of this aid with "Hard Times," a very short, almost ephemeral story. It appeared during only four months and two weeks, a contrast to his usual twenty months' span. This *coup* had actually the result of doubling the circulation of the paper.

Dickens appears to have been a master in the art of *arranging* his monthly part: he would "take out" and alter, so as to make as prominent as possible the exciting incident. But he was now venturing to present before his readers in a story laid out in weekly portions, namely, "Hard Times," one of those recuperating tales which he had occasionally to supply when public attention was relaxed, and usually with good results.

The French, as we know, have long been accustomed to the weekly, even to a daily *feuilleton*—a system against which objections could be offered. In a daily article the author has hardly room to "turn about" or develop incident, and Boz must have found the same difficulty when trying to infuse some stirring action into each weekly portion. Monthly treatment seems the limit. The writer cannot supply these hebdomadal stimulants regularly; the result will be that such stimulants, from repetition, lose all effect.

Dickens, as the world knows, was the great "exploiter" of the "monthly part" system, which he worked up with amazing skill and even science. This science was found in the art of developing a story in successive portions, a different thing from presenting it as a whole. He was now attempting a new system—that of offering a story in *weekly* portions. He had, however, already attempted that system in his "Master Humphrey's Clock," issued in eighty-eight weekly numbers, and also in monthly parts. But now he had to write for *both* monthly and weekly audiences. Such conditions must have seriously affected the construction. For in these weekly fragments he had to offer *something* of interest in each portion, so as to hold the reader and lead him on to the next.

It is curious to find what a difference there is in reading the serial "Hard Times"* in its weekly instalments and in the completed form. Boz seems to have written and catered specially for this hebdomadal reading. Even now take up a stray number and you find yourself interested by the five or six columns of writing, without caring to follow the story; for here is a collection of characters, humorous strokes and incidents quite sufficient to attract and well worth the twopence laid out. It was the same with the monthly parts, which were bought almost as complete books or booklets. I well recall when his more exciting stories were coming out in this detached shape, such as *Dombey*, when the librarians actually *hired* out their copies, and when you saw the green covers in everybody's hand, for all were enchanted with it. Every line of the number was devoured; the witty strokes, then quite novel, got by heart and quoted at dinner tables. Now, of course, his phrases and quips belong to the common currency, and have become quite familiar. Still, this change of treatment, so intermittent and contrary, must have had a bad effect on his style, which he had to adapt in Procrustean fashion to the different situations.

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* Dickens's usual fertility in suggesting titles was to be exhibited on this occasion. He suggested :—

1. "According to Cocker."
2. "Prove It."
3. "Stubborn Things."
4. "Mr. Gradgrind's Facts."
5. "The Grindstone."
6. "Hard Times."
7. "Two and Two are Four."
8. "Something Tangible."
9. "Our Hard-headed Friend."
10. "Rust and Dust."
11. "Simple Arithmetic."
12. "A Matter of Calculation."
13. "A Mere Question of Figures."
14. "The Gradgrind Philosophy."

But the old difficulty of making each weekly portion carry the mechanical framework of the story, and yet display something attractive or exciting, was a sore burden. "The difficulty of the space," he complained to Forster, after a few weeks' trial, "is crushing. Nobody can have an idea of it who has not had an experience of patient fiction-writing with some elbow-room always, and open places in perspective. In this form, with any kind of regard to the current number, there is absolutely no such thing." The final chapter was written at Boulogne in July, 1854, and in a note to Forster (written just before the close of the tale) the author said : "I am three parts mad, and the fourth delirious."

A great charm of the journal was this, that when Boz felt anything acutely, grievance or oppression, he could vent his protest in rather excited strain in his own organ. He would place it in the very front page, so that it should be the first to strike the eye. He spoke as from his own pulpit. This controversial tone lent a peculiar life and attraction. If we indeed went carefully through the whole nineteen or twenty volumes we would be astonished at what an amount of personal details and history connected with Boz's own life we should put together. He really could write nothing that did not reflect his own eager thoughts and feelings and perhaps prejudices ; he revealed himself in every shape, form and suggestion. As we have said, in this respect of thorough *personality* the *Household Words* may be said to be quite unique. The form and pressure of the Editor's thoughts and sympathies are revealed in every line ; his vital influence made itself felt everywhere. Where he did not write he influenced and directed. It was only a man of his conspicuous influence and vast reputation that could produce such a result. Hence *Household Words* will always be found an attractive miscellany exhibiting the great writer almost as much in the pages of the magazine as in any of his official writings.

Forster has well described the principles that guided Dickens in his system of dealing with contributors. They were of a thorough, conscientious kind. "It was distinguished above all," he says, "by liberality; and a scrupulous consideration and delicacy evinced by him to all his writers was part of the esteem in which he held literature itself." This was most true, and even below the truth. He was really lavish in the matter of money, and would insist on remunerating writers for work that was of no use to him. In fact, according to the phrase, "money was no object." Equally striking was the confidence he put in the person to whom he had entrusted some plan. "Whatever you see your way to," he would say, "I will see mine to," and we knew and understood each other well enough to make the best of these conditions.

Forster also speaks of the extraordinary industry with which he conducted his journal and the unwearied efforts he made to "put himself" with all his personality into it. He would revise and improve every article, sometimes spending as much as four hours over one, "hacking and hewing it" into shape, until he had made the proof look, as he humorously said, "like an inky fishing net." Nothing could be more true than this image, and the cost must have been enormous.

Apart from his brilliant gifts, Dickens, as his followers well know, was one of the most thorough, conscientious and workmanlike writers. On everything that concerned the mechanism of his work he did his very best to bring the best of his judgment, sagacity and labour to bear. The *littérateur* may gather many a useful lesson from his life in this way, from his tact, his knowledge of public taste and fancies, and the minutest details of arrangement. This offers a contrast to the system now in vogue, when a writer of popularity and with a name is privileged to offer anything that he chooses to write to the public, and it is presumed that the public must be willing to accept it on this warrant of his name. But Dickens was unwearied in his attempts at finding out exactly what would do. He could play in delightful fashion with the figures in his house of business, making them quaint and dramatic, and setting them to talk. Witness this happy sketch, in which the whole *personnel* performs :

> "Some demon sprite will somehow have informed you before I write this letter, that Mr. —— has poisoned himself. Frederick Chapman wrote me last night that he had done it 'in his father's house.' A gloomy professional purchaser of Nos., with a dirty face, whom Johnson presented to me in the shop to-day as 'this young man who is always down in Whitefriars,' at half past 11 a.m. of this day offered to make oath 'wot he dun it in Cre-morne in a bottle o' Soda Water. It wos last Sunday, wot he knowed Mr. Simpson well, and he dun it there.' Holdsworth (in a cracked voice and with a great deal more hair on his head than he can possibly govern) said that he, the deceased, 'had been laying it at Miss ——'s door for her getting married.' God knows whether any blurred vision of that most undesirable female with the brass-headed eyes, ever crossed his drunken mind. Frederick Chapman seemed to think it an extraordinarily unpolite thing that he hadn't waited over to-morrow, 'when he knew his brother was going to be married.' And that 's all I know of the ghastly story."

Many lessons might be learned from Dickens by those who would study the mechanism of writing. His principles were ever sound, sensible and consistent, thought out carefully, not capriciously adopted, and inflexibly adhered to. Such niceties as the use of capitals, parentheses, dashes, stops, were all adopted according to fixed rules. In letter writing it is thought that a certain license and carelessness is privileged, but he was as scrupulous in his letters as in his printed works. The late M. Renan had a theory that letters should not be published at all, as they are irresponsible productions, and do not fairly represent the writer's official ideas. They are intended for a single individual and are akin to talk, by which no one holds himself bound. But Dickens's letters were as conscientious and genuine as his print. Everyone is aware of the common, reckless use of italics, a sort of lazy economy of thought, which crudely supplies the lack of fitting expression. It is a fashion to emphasise the beauties of another by taking the same liberty with *his* text. How sensible and acute are Dickens's views on this point. The practice he thought was introduced or enlarged by Hunt.

"It does appear to be a kind of assertion of the editor over the reader, almost over the author himself, which grates on me. The author might almost as well do it himself to my thinking as a disagreeable thing; it is such a strong contrast to the modest, quiet, tranquil beauty of *The Deserted Village.* The practice always reminds me of a man seeing a beautiful view, and not thinking how beautiful it is half so much as what he shall say about it."

He himself had many ingenious and quite legitimate devices of his own for calling attention to what he wished to be thought important, such as putting a word in capitals or in a paragraph to itself. Sometimes he would be sadly disappointed with the number when sent to him "made up." "I am grievously depressed by it," he wrote of one in October, 1852; "it is so exceedingly bad. The first article would not do for an opening. The article was a mistake. Firstly, the subject requires the greatest discretion and nicety of touch; and secondly, it is all wrong and self-contradictory." He had tried to alter and patch it up, but it was "as wide of a first article as anything can be." "About 'Sunday in Paris' there is no kind of doubt—take it out. Such a thing as a crucifixion, unless it were done in a masterly manner, we have no business to stagger families with. Lord bless me! what I could write under that head! Strengthen the number, pray, by anything good you may have. It is a very dreary business as it stands. The proofs want a thorough revision."

In this intimate connection of Dickens with his journal we find something almost dramatic constantly turning up. He so thoroughly "lived in it" that it became a part of himself; it was with him always. His friends and contributors, with their private ways and fashions and thoughts, were associated with the paper and mixed up with his private life. This is what gives it its vitality and charm and makes it so interesting.

Thus years later—so late as August, 1869—he sent his daughter Mamie the sheets of a "remarkable story" which he thought might please her. "I offer," he said, "a prize of six pairs of gloves, between you, your aunt, and Ellen Stone as competitors, to whomsoever will tell me what idea in this second part is mine. I don't mean an idea in language or the turning of a sentence in any letter descriptive of an action or a gesture or what not in a small way, but an idea distinctly affecting the whole story, *as I found it.* You are all to assume that I found it in the main as you read it, with one exception. If I had written it I should have made the woman love the man at last; but I didn't write it, so finding that it wanted something, I put that something in. What was it?"

How delightfully piquant is this! How interesting he could ever make himself to his own family! Most ordinary persons would scarcely think it worth while, or would not have time to exert themselves in this fashion.

Our author was, of course, through his life beset with applications from aspiring candidates for his "valued opinion" on the merits of literary performances or their capacity of making a living at the profession. The unwearied patience with which he would receive and consider such requests was truly remarkable. He seems to have invariably replied, kindly but firmly, dissuading the applicant where he saw that they had no real talent for "writing." He was equally candid when influential friends undertook, as they often did, to introduce their own clients. It is astonishing to think of this busy man sitting down deliberately and conscientiously to consider such futilities, but in his letters he carried out truly his great principle of doing his best.

In his wish to have the productions of his writers put fairly before him for his judgment, and thus give them every chance, he often had them set up in type, which must have increased his outlay for printing to a considerable degree. From my own experience I can give an instance. When, but little experienced in novel writing I brought him a one-volume novel, he said in his good-natured fashion.

"Well, to give it every chance I 'll have it set up at full length for you; if it doesn't suit me it may someone else."

He was certainly the fairest, most spirited, and conscientious of editors, thus illustrating in this point his favourite maxim of doing everything in his best way, and taking every means to secure what was the best.

The most welcome papers in the journal are beyond doubt those of a purely personal kind, which really furnish a complete picture of his own thoughts, feelings and adventures during a long course of years. As Mr. Forster says, "They had a character and completeness derived from their plan and from their personal tone, as well as frequent individual confessions. *Their titles expressed a personal liking.*" This referred to the "Uncommercial" papers, but all his titles had this very significance, and betrayed the author's partiality. They told a story, as it were.

In taking up volumes of collected essays of this kind, long after this day of their ephemeral success, we are conscious of a certain flatness, as of champagne left long uncorked. This is owing to the peculiar form, or the shape in which they appeared. The writers were compelled, owing to the necessity of producing effect, to adopt a tone of exaggeration. Everything, even trivial, had to be made more comic than it really was. This was the law of the paper, and the reader is conscious of it when he takes up the journal after an interval of years. As I can testify from my own experience, this pressure became all but irresistible. A mere natural, unaffected account of any transaction, it was felt, was out of place; it would not harmonise with the brilliant, buoyant things surrounding it. I often think with some compunction of my own trespassings in this way, and of the bad habit one gradually acquired of colouring up for effect, and of magnifying the smallest trifle.

Boz rarely meddled with artistic matters—art was scarcely part of his equipment. Once he made a rather venomous attack on the new Pre-Raphaelite Brethren, ridiculing "one of these strange creatures with a dislocated throat, and horrible in her ugliness, while nobody is paying any attention to a sniffing old woman who seems to have mistaken that shop for the tobacconist's next door." He then fell on the Academy, and humorously suggested that we should have other "pre-something souls," such as a pre-perspective Brotherhood, a pre-Newton one, where gravity should be left out, a pre-Galileo one, with no "travelling round the sun," and many more rough quips of the kind. The piece was entitled, "New Lamps for Old Ones."* Pugin, whom he never favoured, was brought on, "being engaged to supply manuscript characters that nobody on earth shall be able to read."

It is quaint to think that many of these "eccentrics" became later his fast friends, notably Millais, and that another became his son-in-law. He must have been seriously wrought, "perplexed in the extreme," for he rarely adopted this tone.†

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* Two or three years later I find him writing to Millais apologetically: "I send you the account of the Fire Brigade which we spoke of last night. If you have in your mind any previous association with the pages in which it appears—very likely you have none—it may be a rather disagreeable one. In that case I hope a word, frankly said, may make it pleasanter. Objecting very strongly to what I believed to be an unworthy use of your great powers, I once expressed the objection in this same journal. My opinion on that point is not in the least changed, but it has never dashed my admiration of your progress in what I suppose are higher and better things. In short, you have given me such great reasons (in your works) to separate you from uncongenial association, that I wish to give you in return one little reason for doing the like by me," etc.

† I recall a delightful, even jovial supper, after one of the Readings, when he brought home Millais, myself, and one or two more. Not in the least fatigued by his exertions, he was the "life and soul" of the party.

Boz was ever willing in the case of a friend to give "bold advertisement" to any of his performances, and he generally contrived to do this in a skilful, if artful fashion. Once, however, this form of his good nature led him into an awkward embarrassment, which yet must have made him "laugh consumedly." No one enjoyed such situations more, even when they were at his own expense. There was a show then exhibiting, a Panorama of the Overland Route to India, painted by some of his artist friends. He represented an imaginary Mr. Booley as travelling in the East, and gravely and seriously describing all that he saw. Mr. Booley was being actually entertained by "The Social Oysters," to whom he unfolded his adventures as though he had been *really* on his travels. It was a rather ponderous jest, but it served.

At the close he gave the health of Mr. Banvard, Mr. Brees, Mr. Bonomi, Mr. Thomas Grieve, etc. This was simple enough, but in a few weeks' time he had to print "a card from Mr. Booley." It seemed that besides Mr. Grieve, the famous scene painter, there were others, such as Mr. Telbin, who had lent their services, and who possibly resented their names being omitted. Hence "Mr. Booley's card." And so Boz in his *amende* has to recite all the names of these sensitive gentlemen. Here is certain proof that bare mention in *Household Words* was of value to reputation.

Mr. Rudolph Lehmann, M.P., a man of many varied gifts, has recently published a full account of Wills's confidential relations with Dickens when acting as his assistant-editor (see page 120). Here we have the pair in council debating writers and choice of subjects, "making up" the number for the best dramatic effect, and undertaking a needless proof-correcting, as it were, which might have been spared and left to an inferior skilled hand. The curious feature was the cold, rather "hard" attitude taken up by Boz, who here showed himself the man of business and little else, and a clever, capable man of business too. But the impression left was hardly that of the genial and engaging conductor. It came as a complete surprise to myself—to me who was closely connected with him in innumerable transactions. I had found quite another Dickens to deal with. But what could not but affect me most of all was to compare his stern severity to notable men, such as Sala, Horne and others, who had failed him or shirked their duties, and his great leniency to myself. With them he would "stand no nonsense," but with me he was but too indulgent. For this his readers need only glance at all he wrote to me.

Nothing gives such an idea of Dickens's all but appalling industry in editing—his *labor improbus*—as the record thus furnished by Mr. Lehmann. He seemed never to relax for a moment, and continued his efforts to the end and to the very last; whether away in the country or abroad or at the office, it was the same.

By October, 1851, the editor, as related elsewhere, taking due stock of his journal, found reason to make a gentle complaint to his subordinate of a serious want in the *complexion* of the paper, namely, "elegance of fancy." There was no complaint of Wills; it was due to the "form and pressure" of events. There was a dreary arithmetical "Cocker-cum-Walkinghame dustiness" (as he drolly expressed it!) that was powerfully depressing. Wills made a very reasonable defence. He compared it with other journals to its advantage.

The elegance of fancy it was impossible to supply to order in every number, and the conductor might weekly scatter *sprinklings* of his own wit and fancy: he suggested that every week he should go over each article and "touch them up" in this fashion. This Boz soon came to do, and so plentifully as to turn the slips into a network of blue lines and insertions, thus severely increasing the cost of the setting.

The mere arrangement and order of the papers seemed of immense importance to him. He, perhaps exaggerating, would shift, take out, substitute, so as to secure better effect. He would make calculations of the "slips," cut down, expand, or cancel. He had to be on his guard against "faked" papers copied from old magazines and sent as new compositions. He had a wonderful gift for detecting such impositions, but the inquiries took time.

"I return the proofs, but they will want to be looked over very carefully. 'The Flag of England' taboo. 'Across the Street' to be postponed, as too evidently a remnant from the Christmas number, and would come too near that story of Thomas. Lead off the number with 'The Guards and the Line.' . . . See to the proof, the punctuation, and slovenly composition here and there. Howitt all right, but take out his German poetry altogether or make him render it in English; also 'Zoological Auction.'"

"The proof is arrived. I will read it and write about it when I have done my article. . . . I send a paper of White's." In a single letter he thus disposes of office business. He proposed to rearrange the whole number. "Get Collins into the opening. Taken some things out of Sala. The Poem 'very good' (but he criticizes it). 'Looking Out of Window' ridiculously printed, huddledry sentences, etc." The same remark applied to another paper: "Pray look at proof and copy." Referring to his own paper, not sure but that he used an allusion to be found in a previous one: "Will you refer back." Wills was to write a special article. Now, all these topics concerned a single number.

In Mr. Lehmann's interesting volume we find close upon four hundred pages of astonishing entries of this kind, an amount of steady "spade work" quite sufficient to engross all the energies of an active man and expended regularly week by week. And yet after all one is inclined to ask, Was it needful or necessary? Above all, we might put these questions: Could not the bulk of the labour have been deputed? and was not all this painstaking effect at selection and arrangement, this contrasting of papers and the rest, more or less superfluous, and a matter which the public was indifferent to or scarcely regarded? It was cutting blocks with the razor, and such a finely-tempered razor!

We must, however, discriminate between the two journals, *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. The first to this hour displays his complete personality, and is permeated with it, for the reason that he took such infinite unflagging pains to make himself present. We take up a volume; it has a quaintly old-fashioned air, and seems to breathe forth all kinds of memories. But this is not the impression left by its successor.

One of the most characteristic specimens of the *Household Words* treatment—that is of presenting grave and intricate matter in lively humoristic style—is a series of papers dealing with a crying abuse—the monstrous carelessness in the custody of wills and such valuable papers in diocesan registry offices. A sort of special commissioner went round visiting the various districts, interviewing the custodians and officials, and bringing home the most startling accounts of the treatment of the old parchments, wills and other documents. The result was set forth in a series of humorous or grotesque reports, clearly inspired and "touched up" by the Editor himself, who seemed to revel in the humorous observation of the registrars and other officials. All these farcical sketches of abuses proved to be his own method of reform, and were almost always crowned with success.

CHAPTER XII

DICKENS'S CHARITIES. HIS TOLERANCE AND GOOD HUMOUR AS EDITOR. HIS OWN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE JOURNAL. A CRISIS APPROACHING.

To Dickens's weekly record of letters we owe an extraordinary, unexpected revelation of the extent to which the generous administrator exercised the charity which he conscientiously believed was *due* to the poor. It came on me as a sort of revelation, though well knowing, with all the community, how tender was his heart; that he thought himself bound, as the monastic order is by vow, to the service of the poor, and that once an uttered request for relief came to him, he had in solemn conscience to grant it! He thought it just as imperative as a tradesman's bill for goods supplied.

In the lower portion of the office where the sale of the numbers was conducted was installed for many years, and for more years again after Dickens's death, a worthy Holdsworth, an official always cheery and efficient. The chief, when Wills was away, used to write to him and employ him on little confidential missions. He was really and in truth his official almoner. It was wonderful how the energetic Editor, with all the calls upon his time, contrived to look after small details of his charities and always in the most systematic and business-like fashion. Thus he would send this follower forms of letters which he was to copy carefully and dispatch to the postulant.

I once saw a series of letters addressed to this agent, which supply the most striking, amazing evidence of Dickens's generous and systematic character. He was away in France, but in constant touch with his family. " Begging letters " would arrive in vast numbers, and these seem to have been regularly forwarded to him and noted. The rule was almost invariable—" Go to the address and inquire into the case. If the statement be true, give the enclosed cheque for £5." This was truly extraordinary, and throws a wondrous light upon his character.

It is an almost incredible thing, and we read these numerous scraps of direction with wonder. He appeared to be directing bills to be paid, and so they seemed to *him*, for he considered that he owed the money. In one of his letters we find : " I send with this a *black surtout*—that and £2 will be sufficient for the Rathbone Place man, £2 for Macpherson the orphan, £1 for a needlewoman, and after this I must really pull up."* All which is significant of a systematic liberality. I say it deliberately that this extraordinary, well-organised *system* of giving to the poor is without parallel in the case of any great writer. Such, indeed, might be found in that of a professed philanthropist, such as Miss Coutts in his own day. But the wonder is to see this much-sought, brilliant being, finding himself under some compelling force to consider what his poor neighbours might want, searching them out, following the example of St. Vincent of Paul. Every moment of his time was employed, but he found time for this holy work.

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* Lehmann, p. 79.

He was for personal service as against "drawing cheques"; but his friend Forster knew him well when he wrote the lines prefixed to his *Life of Goldsmith*, quoted in another part of this book.

Here are some casual allusions to the fraternity's demands upon him, where, it will be seen, he almost accepts the begging-letter writer's claims as all but legitimate:—

"I return three (see P.S.), retaining Miss Walpole's, late of the St. James's Theatre. She has been a begging-letter writer, within my knowledge, these fifteen years. Mrs. Ramo Samee is a case that there is no doubt about. John has been there once, and can do the needful again. Something like a couple of guineas, I should think, would be the sum most useful to her. But if there were any hope (I fear there is not) of doing her any real good with more, I should not object to more. The other two letters I really cannot form a judgment upon. But I a little distrust 'E. Martell' who advertised in the *Chronicle*. Do you think them worth inquiring into?

"I bear such a long, long train, that I am never rich, and never was, and never shall be. But (—— excepted), I always want to make some approach towards doing my duty, and I could give away £20 in all just now to alleviate *real distress*—should be as happy to do that as I should be the reverse in lazily purchasing false comfort for myself under the specious name of charity."

Here is a fine sense of duty, regulated perhaps a little indiscreetly; but who shall blame him for that—which proves how steadily he was influenced by his fine feeling of charity. And yet this is but one specimen.

A unique thing about Dickens, and it is rarely found in men of his high position, was his wonderful tolerance as an Editor. His indulgence, good humour, patience, and above all admission of those he was dealing with to perfect equality, becomes almost amazing when we think of what are the usual relations between the well-worked editor and those dependent on his favour. To some highly-important contributor such will, of course, be accommodating; but to the young, unheralded writer, who is deeply gratified and elated at his employment, he is usually unceremonious and leaves the duty of dealing with him to the deputy. As for opening his mind and heart to the juvenile beginner, and explaining, elaborating, why or wherefore, he declines, such a thing is not dreamt of. A printed form tells him the thing "won't do," "won't suit," "very sorry," and so on. As for anecdotes, jokes, pleasant remarks, kindly reference to private or family matters, there is again no time.

No one but those who had evidence of his labours, and actually seen him at his work, could credit the extent to which he taxed and over-taxed his strength, and of this latter he had not very much in reserve; but his vigorous spirit never relaxed or failed him. The outside world had no idea of the heavy drudgery that he carried on during some twenty years. It simply assumed that his time was fully occupied with "the kindly engendure" of his novels, an easy and agreeable occupation, taking him about a couple of years with an interval of about the same length between each. Then there came the heavy drudgery of the Readings kept up for years, a heavy burden. Who could consider that all the time there was going on the deadly toll of editorship, which week by week had to be paid, entailing many hours of hard work and anxious care and thought? It was fancied that the real burden fell on the well-paid assistant-editor, and that only the light, decorative touchings were reserved by Boz for himself.

When Wills wished to add to his other duties that of editing *The Civil Service Gazette* his "chief" wrote to him in somewhat severe style—almost sternly refusing to sanction the proposal. He made it clear to him that he would have to sacrifice his present post. Dickens was in the right, as it would be impossible to edit two such papers in a satisfactory way. Wills rather ruefully had to abandon his project.* A curious allusion shows that Boz had allowed his deputy to "speculate" in the fortunes of the story *Hard Times*, in which speculation he seems to have been unsuccessful.

The impression left by reading Mr. Lehmann's records is that here an inexhaustible and buoyant spirit was found ever ready, ever prepared, never uncertain or wavering, but decided always and directing with a firm, masterful purpose. Never do we find him, I shall not say out of temper, but out of humour. And how resourceful! In the numberless difficulties of the machine, there he was always with a remedy or method of extrication. His policy always certain and consistent, while his followers could always look to him for safe guidance. He kept the innumerable threads gathered up in his own hands, delegating nothing. Indeed, nobody was capable of assisting or even advising him, for there was an enormous distance between him and his followers. How he could really appreciate good service and valuable assistance is shown by what he thought of the invaluable Arthur Smith, a precious man of business, exactly suited to him, and the well-trained Wills himself, whose very value he only found out when he had lost him.

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* Mr. Lehmann furnishes the correspondence, which is somewhat dry in tone.

Another wonderful thing was to find him ever patiently explaining to his subordinates "the why and wherefore" of all that he proposed to do and the grounds of his objections. The typical editor would have said magisterially "do so and so" or "it must be so." And how happily he seasoned his objection with a pleasant quip or jest, for

> A merrier man
> Within the limits of becoming mirth
> I never spent an hour's talk withal.

All Dickens's contributions to his journal are delightful and of absorbing interest, because so autobiographical, told also with an engaging frankness and humour. It is extraordinary that his much-loved city of Rochester has not shown more recognition of his ardent, passionate love for it and the immortality he has given to it. Every stone of it almost finds a place in his memory. His first book and his last were devoted to it. It was his inspiration throughout, because stored with his precious childhood's memories. All through his journal he was turning back to it.

A happy illustration of his practice of binding up happy memories with some favourite spot where he had spent happy days was furnished in a paper entitled "Pavilionstone," which was a vivid, picturesque sketch of Folkestone. Every touch recalls the place, and all is set off with many humorous and witty strokes. The name was due to his liking for the well-known, comfortable hostelry, for which he had a sort of affection. Gad's Hill was on the South-Eastern line, and many a time when he was a little "run down" he would haste to the station and make straight for Paris, and on his return, arriving about daybreak, would turn in to this comfortable shelter and find repose. He loved such associations and recalled them gratefully.*

One of his most animated of these travelling sketches, so startling in its vividness and pictorial force, is entitled "A Flight," and so indeed it is, for he whirls us along with him on his journey. What was this "flight"? It was his attempt to paint in vivid words the whole course of a journey from London to Paris by the express route, then considered a marvellous performance for speed and certainty. It is most dramatic. You seem to start with him in the morning, to be whirled along. "Bang!" that is a station passed and gone. There are amusing characteristics, touches of comedy and farce. Then the day wearing on, there is the sense of a change to the French country, charmingly described, the languor of travel, and final arrival in Paris—all wonderfully done. So with "Our French Watering Place," that is Boulogne, and "Our English Watering Place," Broadstairs, equally vivid; all delightful reading and full of charming pictures. They also belong to his autobiography. In the former is the exquisite sketch of his landlord, under the name of Loyal. With a just pride the relatives of this worthy Frenchman have placed on his grave a sentence of Dickens in English, warmly praising his trusty qualities and faithful heart.†

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* Alas! the old Pavilion has long since become one of the "Grand Hotels" of its day, having been rebuilt and enlarged. Not long ago, wishing to register permanently memories of his connection with the place, I wrote for the proprietors a full account of the various incidents of this interesting relationship, adding a reprint of his own vivacious sketch—this for the benefit of the guests. Nearly all Dickens's Inns have thus found their chroniclers.

† A bust of Dickens by myself has been placed in the Municipal Museum at Rue Beaurepaire, Boulogne.

It would take long and a vast deal of space to give any idea of the reforming work done by Charles Dickens in the pages of his journal. Nothing escaped him; the exposure or "gibbeting" was done in his own quietly sarcastic fashion, without verbiage, and always hitting home. It is certain that his *exposés* set forth with all his wit at least started the reform, for his words were winged and figured in every paper. A single specimen of his treatment would represent innumerable others. In one of these cases of abuse and hardship his vivid and sarcastic presentations brought a remedy. This was called "A Poor Man's Tale of a Patent," in which in a half-humorous, half-pathetic strain he held up the cruel impediments that beset the way of a humble inventor. This text he enlarged and made more potent in one of his stories.

There was a special sort of article which used to appear occasionally when some social abuse of a crying sort appealed to the editor, and then indeed he spoke out and brought all his sarcasm to bear. Witness this. His friend, Alfred Wigan, a flourishing actor, noted for his gentility both on and off the stage, quite above the ranks of the trading actor, naturally thought he might send his son to a select private school. The boy remained some time, when the principal wrote to ask his removal, as he had only just discovered that his father was an actor! This seems incredible nowadays, so much have things changed; but it was thought nothing extraordinary then. But how Boz lashed the principal with scorn and ridicule.

On December 24th, 1859, we find *Leigh Hunt, a Remonstrance.* The autobiography had just been issued by Leigh Hunt's son. Boz seized the opportunity to give much praise to the son's filial labour, and at the same time offer a fresh vindication of himself from the Skimpole charge, and this fresh renewal of it, "and to the faults of which he has been accused." He pleaded that "the gay and ostentatious wilfulness" of Hunt's manner and "ways" tempted him, "God forgive him," to make the little surface peculiarities of his friend the garnishing, as it were, of one of his figures. This was all. The character within was a different thing, and had no connection with the poet. Such was the defence, which seemed to most a little slender. But it was a most strained, impossible situation; there was no excuse to make. "The thing was so," as the family put it. Nothing could be said save what was "lame," and poor Boz did his amiable best to make up for it. But now a more serious annoyance had arisen, which led to a crisis in the undertaking.

III

"ALL THE YEAR ROUND"

“All The Year Round”

CHAPTER XIII

THE “PERSONAL” DISPUTE. EXTINCTION OF “HOUSEHOLD WORDS” AND FOUNDING OF “ALL THE YEAR ROUND.”

Charles Dickens had now been with his admiring audience for close on five-and-twenty years. He was bound to them and they to him by, as it were, two stout, imperishable cables, to wit his triennial novel and his weekly, never-flagging serial utterances in his journal. These relations seemed likely to be strengthened. Who then could have conceived or prophesied that in the year of grace 1858 the whole fabric should have begun to totter, and that a strange, sudden change should have come about. This literally—I remember it well—took away all our breaths. I can hardly realise it now, so astonishing does it seem. Who could have fancied that within a year the pleasantly recreative little journal was to be abruptly done to death and extinguished by its own creator, or that so disturbing a revelation of his domestic life should have been abruptly placed before the astonished public?

On June 12th eager readers read with amazement on the front page a proclamation which he addressed to the public relating to certain differences with his wife, together with an announcement of their separation! Falsehoods and misrepresentations on this head had, as he fancied, been circulated, and he took this method of setting himself right with the world. People were all but bewildered and almost stunned, so unexpected was the revelation. Everyone was for the most part in supreme ignorance of what the document could possibly refer to. It were idle to conceal that there was a good deal of comment as to the propriety of the appeal, and the genial author heard, perhaps for the first time, his written utterances criticised with an unpleasant candour. What did it all mean? The simple incident of incompatibility between husband and wife, so common, too, between an author and an author's wife, might have been lamented, and in the absence of details would have been received with sympathy; but most extraordinary was the delusion that all his readers had heard of some particular slander that had grown out of the domestic trouble, the fact being that nearly every one who had read the dark allusion was in the completest ignorance.

This "Personal," as Edmund Yates tells us, had been submitted to various friends. Forster and Mark Lemon were strongly against its publication; Yates also took the same view. Indeed, it might be supposed that there could be but one judgment on the matter, at least as regards the writer's own interest. Lemon's opposition was to be the cause of quarrel between the friends.* Forster suggested that the matter should be submitted to Mr. Delane, and this gentleman unfortunately gave his voice for publication.

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* The estrangement between Dickens and Mark Lemon (then the Editor of *Punch*), brought about by this unfortunate affair, went on, says Mr. Kitton, "until, years afterwards, Clarkson Stanfield on his death-bed besought Dickens to resume friendship with the man with whom, after all, he had no cause for quarrel. Dickens sent Lemon a kindly letter when 'Uncle Mark' appeared as 'Falstaff' in amateur theatricals;" and "when Stanfield was buried the two men" (says Mr. M. H. Spielmann in his *History of "Punch"*) "clasped hands over his open grave." On the death of Dickens some of the most touching and beautiful verses that ever appeared in *Punch* were devoted to the novelist's memory.

But at this moment, as is well known, Dickens's nerves were in a highly-wrought, over-strained condition. He saw things *en noir*, and had many anxieties. The state of things at home had become unendurable. He fancied that there were hostile rumours about.*

Every newspaper in the kingdom was, of course, eager to reproduce the "Personal;" they *ought* to have been so, as it was his wish, and a most important piece of *news*, and concerned one of the most eminent men in the country. The one single exception—and there was only one—was the journal of his own confidential publishers, as they might be called, so closely were they bound together where their interests were concerned, who positively declined to admit it into *Punch*. The plea urged was that it was incompatible with the humorous character of the paper. An important henchman in the service of Bradbury and Evans, also editor of *Punch*, adviser and agent, was Mark Lemon, a rather weighty personality, one of those versatile and all-round men who used to abound, for he was writer, actor, playwright, humorist, editor—all on an abundant scale. He had also written a little in *Household Words*, and in 1857 had taken a part in Wilkie Collins's *Frozen Deep* at Boz's little theatre. It was a surprise then shortly after to find him confronting Dickens as adviser and manager of Mrs. Dickens's affairs in the unhappy dispute. This must have engendered hostility; and no doubt Dickens attributed the exclusion of his "Personal" from *Punch* to his baleful influence. Most natural, then, that he should associate the firm with hostile or unfriendly ideas.* The various stages in the strife that followed were sad and tumultuous. The Dickens household was to be divided. And now, strange conjunction! *Household Words* was also to be "broken up," to be, in the words of a great iconoclast, "smashed, pulverised, and utterly destroyed." Amazing all this! The unlucky, offending publishers were also to be "made to smart." The sensitive Dickens could not now endure to be any more associated with them. This was natural in one so highly strung. At any cost or any sacrifice they must *go*. Their share in *Household Words* was only a quarter; Dickens practically held the other three-quarters. As they refused to sell or give up this interest, Boz thought that his greater share allowed him to do what he pleased, even to the total destruction of the whole enterprise. *Sint ut sunt, aut non sint.*

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* I will not reproduce this well-known "Personal"—it were needless and painful to do so—and thus revive the distressful incident; but it is impossible in a History of his Journals wholly to pass it by. The curious may look for it in its original place.

The proceedings that followed in the dispute with Bradbury and Evans were very protracted, and spread over nearly a whole year. The "Personal" article appeared on June 12th, 1858, and it was not until May of the following year that the destruction of the old journal was accomplished. These must have been agitating times—litigation going on in the Courts, the publishers attempting to "restrain" the impulsive, but determined Boz from "injuring their joint property," as they considered it, by the announcement of his resolve to extinguish the old journal. It was said that the publishers had a project of buying *Household Words* and offering the editorship to Thackeray, but Dickens was not likely to have tolerated this. He never for a moment relaxed his purpose, but strenuously and unflinchingly announced that he *had* the power of doing what he pleased with his "own paper," and that the Courts would, and must, decide with him. And this proved to be actually the case. This resolute attitude, evidently independent of legal advice, was throughout characteristic of the man; and through his life he showed the same inflexibility once he had adopted a particular course. At the same time it was a period of intense agitation for him. He had his own family troubles to deal with, which wrought upon his over-strained nerves, and these had to be arranged and composed. He had practically to begin a new life.

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* What is convincing as to the likelihood of this speculation is a vehement, passionate letter of Dickens which was offered for sale some years ago, in which he denounces in excited terms any member of his family who should even speak to him of that connection.

There was always a dogged determination roused in Dickens when he felt that he had been unjustly treated. He would not change, relax or compromise until he had carried out his design; nor could he endure what are called "half measures." The injury, it seemed to him, was so gross that he firmly settled that he would shake himself free of Bradbury and Evans for ever; and perhaps he saw too that he would find himself now in a position to do greater things when he would be unshackled by the restraints of partnership. With his usual firm sagacity he had gauged the respective rights of the parties; had made up his mind that he was the virtual proprietor of the journal. Further, that having extinguished the *soi-disant* rights of the publishers, he would extinguish the journal itself and start a new paper, uncontrolled and unshackled, on its ruins. And this programme he was enabled to carry out to the letter, the law eventually supporting his views.

The law had now to decide between the disputants, and on March 26th the question was argued before the Master of the Rolls. The publishers had filed a bill the dissolution of the partnership, and moved to restrain the author from publishing notices that the journal would be discontinued. Their case was set forth in an appeal to the public, no doubt drawn up by Mark Lemon, their henchman and adviser.*

The decision of the Court was practically that the journal was to be set up to public auction and sold for the benefit of the contending parties according to their respective shares. Accordingly, as stated, the property was sold on May 16th, 1859, for a sum of £3,500. This was a really enormous sum for an unproductive and now valueless object; for the announcement on the title-page of the new journal about to be started ("with which is incorporated *Household Words*") had no commercial value. The sum became literally a charge on the new journal, and the burden must have crippled him to a certain extent. What courage must the intrepid conductor have had thus to burn his boats and to play for such an uncertain stake! The circulation of the journal was very great. Some years before this episode it was stated in an American encyclopædia that its circulation in London alone was in one year ninety thousand copies per week! It seemed a perilous and delicate matter to meddle with this growing property.†

So determined was the author on the course he was to pursue, and so thoroughly made up was his mind, that fully six months before his rights were settled by law he was planning an entirely new journal, which was to succeed the old *Household Words.* By the opening of 1859 he was arranging all the details and discussing a suitable name, a most important and yet embarrassing point. "I shall never," he wrote to his friend Forster, "be able to do anything for the work until it has a fixed name," and he added that the same odd feeling affects everybody else. His familiarity with and love of Shakespeare made him once more turn to the bard. "Don't you think," he wrote, "that this is a good name and quotation? I have been quite delighted to get hold of it for our title:—

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* See Appendix A.

† When the sale of the *Household Words* was going on at Hodgson's, Forster and Arthur Smith, with another friend of Dickens's, attended while Dickens waited at home to hear the news of how the business had gone off. The friend was the first to arrive at Wellington Street, and reported the successful issue. He described, too, how admirably and judiciously Forster had behaved all through, showing great firmness, coolness and promptitude. When Forster arrived in his turn, Dickens good-naturedly repeated to him this praise. To whom Forster, in his own admirable style, "Then I am sorry, my dear Dickens, that I cannot reciprocate the compliment, for a *damneder ass* than your friend Mr. —— I never met in all my life." The *surprise* in this speech is truly original and diverting, to say nothing of the invented, highly piquant *comparative.* I have little doubt that Mr. —— was Wills, between whom and Forster there was not much love lost.

"Household Harmony.

"'At last by notes of Household Harmony.'"
(Henry VI (Part iii.), Act iv. Sc. 6.)

The sagacious, "long-headed" Forster saw here an awkwardness. The malicious would assuredly make merry in their application of this title to the very incident which had led to the establishment of the new paper. It is characteristic of the author's eager, sanguine temperament that he scarcely recognised the objection. He disdained to take account of such personal references, "otherwise it is manifest that I never can write another story." This, however, was a complete fallacy, and his friend eventually prevailed.

Innumerable other titles were suggested and rejected, such as "The Hearth," "The Anvil," "The Forge," "The Crucible," "The Anvil of the Time," "Charles Dickens's Own," "Seasonable Leaves," "Evergreen Leaves," "Home," "Home Music," "Change," "Time and Tide," "Twopence," "English

Bells," "Weekly Bells," "The Rocket," "Good Humour." Some of these were good and pretty, many were bad. "The Hearth" and "The Forge" were effective; "The Rocket" original and taking, and might be a capital name for an evening paper of our time; "Twopence" was out of the question. Some of these had been suggested for his older journal. "The Anvil" he seemed to relish on both occasions. At last, on January 28th, he wrote in great delight that he had hit upon a title which he thought "really admirable, especially with the quotation *before* it" instead of after it, as in *Household Words.* This was—

"The story of our lives from year to year." *

"*All the Year Round.*
A Weekly Journal conducted by
CHARLES DICKENS."

And this was the one preferred.

It always has seemed an unfortunate selection—barren, cumbersome, and inexpressive. Every serial, indeed, everything in life, is an "all the year round" one. One of his friends, I remember, suggested "The Story of our Lives" or "From Year to Year," either of which would have been better than the one chosen. His own first inspiration was perhaps the best of all, and it might have had a serious influence on the success of the paper; but *All the Year Round* was never so heartily relished as the older journal. The new title had a *pragmatical* flavour and was uninteresting.

By February he had taken a new office, abandoning the old, inviting, cosy, bow-windowed house, so long

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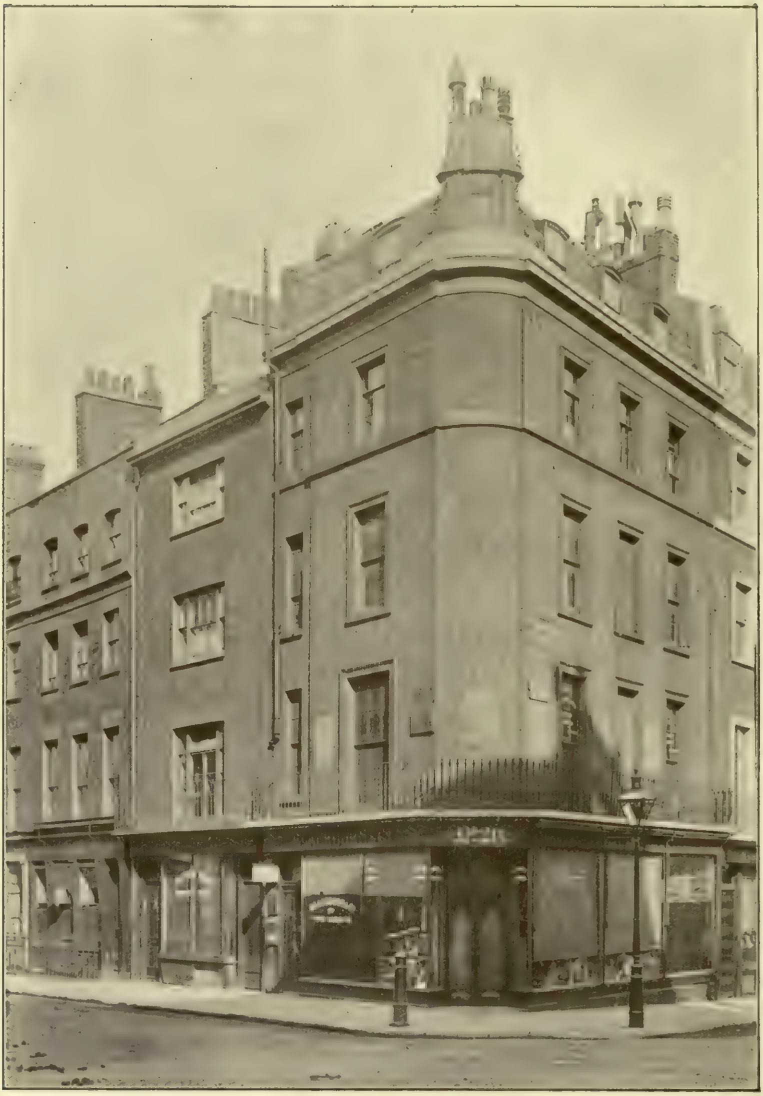
* It is truly extraordinary that here again Dickens should have gone astray in the text of his motto. The line is found in Act i. of *Othello*, and runs, "The story of my life from year to year."



"ALL THE YEAR ROUND" OFFICE,
No. 26 WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND.

associated with the old journal. His new home was a rather ungainly edifice, No. 26, situated at the corner of York Street. It never seemed inviting, being a shop rather than an office. However, it was roomy, contained plenty of accommodation, which the other house lacked sadly, and it continued to be the office of *All the Year Round* for over thirty years, until Charles Dickens the younger, on the expiration of the lease, gave it up to the owner.

On May 28th, 1859, appeared the last number of the agreeable, interesting *Household Words*, which for nearly ten years had so increased the harmless gaiety of the nation. This date for its extinction he had settled with singular accuracy long before, even while the legal question was in suspense. The last paper was called "An Executor." On the front page appeared this address (the two journals were for a while running together) :—

"*All the Year Round.*

"After the appearance of the present concluding number of *Household Words* this publication will merge into the new weekly publication *All the Year Round*, and the title *Household Words* will form a part of the title page of *All the Year Round.*"

And in another part of the new paper we read:

"On the day in which the final number bears date the public will have read a great deal to the contrary" [*i.e.* that he could not discontinue the journal], "and *will observe that it has not in the least affected the result.*" In fact, so complete was the victory, that he could not resist "rubbing it in," as it is called, and reminding the public that he was victorious "all along the line."

A further proclamation described *All the Year Round* in these words:—

> "Since this was issued the journal itself has come into existence, and has spoken for itself five weeks. Its fifth number is published to-day, and its circulation, moderately stated, trebles that now relinquished in *Household Words*.
>
> "In referring our readers henceforth to *All the Year Round*, we can but assure them afresh of our unwearying and faithful service in what is at once the work and chief pleasure of our life. Through all that we are doing, and through all that we design to do, our aim is to do our best in sincerity of purpose and true devotion of spirit.
>
> "We do not for a moment suppose that we may lean on the character of these pages and rest contented at the point where they stop. We see in that point but a starting-place on our new journey, and on that journey, with new prospects opening out before us everywhere, we joyfully proceed, entreating our readers —without any of the pain of leave-taking incidental to most journeys—to bear us company *All the Year Round*."

Yet another proclamation:—

> "Nine years of *Household Words* are the best practical assurance that can be offered to the public of the spirit and objects of *All the Year Round*.
>
> "In transferring myself and my strongest energies from the publication that is about to be discontinued to the publication that is about to begin, I have the happiness of taking with me the staff of writers with

whom I have laboured and all the literary and business co-operation that can make my work a pleasure. In some important respects I am now free greatly to advance on past arrangements. Those I leave to testify for themselves in due course.

"That fusion of the graces of the imagination with the realities of life, which is vital to the welfare of the community, and for which I have striven from week to week as honestly as I could during the last nine years, will continue to be striven for *All the Year Round.*

"The old weekly cares and duties become things of the past, merely to be assumed with an increased love for them, and brighter hopes springing out of them in the present and the future.

"I look and plan for a very much wider circle of readers, and, yet again, for a steadily expanding circle of readers, in the projects I hope to carry through *All the Year Round*, and I feel confident that this expectation will be realised if it deserve realization.

"The task of my new journal is set, and it will steadily try to work the task out.

"Its pages shall show to what good purpose their motto is remembered in them, and with how much of fidelity they tell

"'The story of our lives from year to year.'

"CHARLES DICKENS."

It is curious to find that among the experimental titles suggested for the new journal was "Once a Week," the one actually adopted by the firm with whom he was at variance, for the journal which they were presently to start in opposition to his. There can be no reasonable explanation offered for this, unless he had himself good-naturedly suggested it to them as a solution. Puzzling also was it that in his first Part was actually found bound up the appeal and prospectus of his late partners, announcing a rival magazine. Here was a *bizarre* combination which had an odd effect. They might be entitled, until its extinction, to a place in the journal, or it may be that they were allowed it by Dickens's good-humoured courtesy. Here was the announcement of the new competing venture;

> " *Once a Week.*
>
> A Miscellany of Literature, Art, Science and popular information.
>
> To be illustrated by Leech, Tenniel, Millais, Hablot Browne, C. Keene, Wolf, etc.
>
> To be published every Saturday, price 3d."

The first number was to appear on July 2nd, 1859. It was to offer serial tales, etc. For the pictorial illustration Leech undertook "all practical arrangements." Writers were "to have the option of signing their contributions." This reads oddly nowadays, when it might run, "Writers will have the option of concealing their names." There was to be "liberal compensation," and the public were assured that as the venture was "a new combination," its directors, "*free from the disability of clique*, are ready and even solicitous to enlist aspiring talents." (Was this aimed at their late partner ?) It may be said, however, that no journal of the kind could be successfully conducted apart from the system of *clique*, that is of a "school" or staff. But nothing was to illustrate more forcibly the fallacy of fancying that lavish outlay and imitation of methods will secure success than this futile attempt. The publishers were speedily to find that they could not bend the Dickensian bow. *Once a Week* was destined to be a costly failure. They supposed that a vast outlay on pictures, designs, etc., with the engagement of first-class artists and engravers, superior writers, and so on, would carry the day. From the very first—and I know its history, having contributed a good deal to it—it might be called a failure. No one was much interested, though all admired the artistry of the thing. It was a correct, satisfactory, but uninteresting venture, and gave Boz not a moment's uneasiness.

To start *All the Year Round* with all *éclat*, the "star" writer himself came forward and "led off" with a new story, comparatively short in its length and development, namely his "Tale of Two Cities." The treatment was purposely dramatic, and became very attractive to the public. To such tales of half the old length he now began rather to incline, being not such a strain upon his powers as the old form. When starting his venture this extraordinary man had on his hands the dissolution of his household, the destruction of his journal, the planning and establishment of a new one, a law suit, and an entirely "fresh spring," as his own Micawber would say, in the shape of a semi-theatrical introduction of himself and his writings to the public! No wonder that he was fretted, "moidered," and heartsore. But almost triumphantly did he emerge from all these trials, without having, in popular slang, "turned a hair." He could hardly be said to have suffered. It would be interesting to discuss here whether this new system of "running" one of his "full-dress" stories, as they might be called, through his weekly paper was as profitable or suitable a method for his interests as the old *mensual* one. As we have seen, this weekly issue made and entailed a different system of writing, that is, the presenting himself to a different kind of audience, whose tastes he had to suit, for he had to make some four distinct appeals, repeated strokes, instead of the former single monthly one. This required quite different fashioning and treatment.*

The second article in *All the Year Round* was "How to be Healthy, Wealthy and Wise." There were also some new features, such as the "Occasional Register," short notes and comments on curious topics, with a series of facetious scraps, "Wanted," "Found," etc. Thus, there was "Wanted" "an original English play of any description within the limits of the United Kingdom," and there was "Found" "an immense flock of gulls to believe in preposterous advertisements." Later came "The Poor Man and his Beer," by Dickens himself, and a long topographical series by Thornbury, "Haunted London," afterwards published in a volume. This no doubt led him to undertake the more serious and important work issued by the Cassells, *Old and New London,* in six volumes, which he did not live to complete. Later again Boz's son-in-law, Charles Collins, began the series of "The Eye-witness," an amusing set. With all these efforts to give a novel and original air to the new venture, it could be said that there was nothing particularly striking about it. It seemed to lack the tranquil unaffected simplicity of the old journal. Perhaps the vein had been somewhat worked out.

On November 26th, 1859, "The Tale of Two Cities," begun in April, 1859, came to its conclusion, and after the words "The End" we read these words:—

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* Mr. Lehmann (p. 261) furnishes an abstract of the chief provisions of the partnership agreement as to *All the Year Round*: (1) Dickens and Wills to be the proprietors; (2) Dickens was to receive three-fourths of the profits; (3) and to be Editor at a salary of £500; (4) Wills to be General Manager, with a commercial control, subject in certain conditions to Dickens; (5) as Sub-Editor to receive £420; (6) should Wills resign his office he was to retain an eighth share; (7) the name of the paper, the Good Will, etc., to be solely Dickens's.

> "We purpose always to reserve the first place in these pages for a continuous original work on fiction, engaging about the same amount of time on its serial publications as that which is now completed. The second story of our series we now beg to introduce to the attention of our readers. It will pass next week into the station hitherto occupied by the 'Tale of Two Cities,' and it is our hope and aim, while we work hard at every other department of our journal, to produce in this one some sustained works of imagination that may become a part of English literature."

Here was an announcement of the new policy, and showed the growing and encroaching influence of fiction. It does seem, indeed, as though the taste for slight sketches and didactic lessons set forth humorously, like Mr. Stiggins's moral "Pocket-handkerchiefs," had somewhat weakened.

And here was the modest introduction of what was to prove to be one of his greatest *coups*—though he did not forecast it—namely, the powerful, if melodramatic, story of "The Woman in White," by Wilkie Collins, which accordingly set forth on its triumphal progress on November 26th, 1859.

The new journal and its story was received with extraordinary favour. He could presently report to his friends that in a single month no less than 35,000 "back numbers" had been sold. The circulation far exceeded that of its predecessor. When the first quarterly account was made out it was found that it had repaid its proprietor all his outlay with five per cent. interest, and there was a balance of £500. Here was a fitting reward for his bold and spirited enterprise! By and by, however, there was near being a catastrophe.

In August it had been thought something of a *coup* to secure the vivacious Lever, or Harry Lorrequer, whose mercurial style was certain to carry the readers with him. I recall the joyous starting, the very original opening, the anticipated enjoyment of the editors. Alas! presently the fires went out altogether; the author seemed to tire of his work, and it was found presently that the readers also were tiring of him. The fact was that the gay and careless pseudo-Irishman (for Lever was an Englishman born and bred) had brought the journal into very parlous straits. The "circulation" was beginning to fall, always a significant and disturbing signal, and the situation soon became rather alarming. But Boz, resourceful always, was undaunted. "I called a council of war at the office on Tuesday," he wrote to Forster (October 4th, 1860). "It was perfectly clear that the one thing to be done was for me to strike in. I have therefore decided to begin the story as of the length of the 'Tale of Two Cities' on the first of December—begin publishing, that is. I must make the most I can out of the book. . . . . The name is 'Great Expectations.' I think a good name." Two days later he wrote in further explanation: "The sacrifice of 'Great Expectations' is really and truly made for myself. The property of *All the Year Round* is far too valuable, in every way, to be much endangered. Our fall is not large, but we have a considerable advance in hand of the story we are now publishing, and there is no vitality in it, and no chance whatever of stopping the fall, which on the contrary would be certain to increase. Now, if I went into a twenty-number serial, I should cut off my power of doing anything for the journal," and so on.

I must confess that there seems to be much of

Lever's buoyant humour in parts of the unpopular story, such as the grotesque diplomatist who would *rename* his subordinates; but it was out of date, old fashioned, and above all, unsuited to a sober congregation. Dickens, moreover, saw that it would not do. Although it was not a year since he had furnished his last story to the magazine, he began at once to prepare another, and in the last week in October, 1860, issued the following announcement: "A new work, by Mr. Charles Dickens, will be commenced—a new serial story—to begin on December 1st, to be completed in about four months." "Great Expectations" was to prove to be a work of great charm and special attraction for readers, its success being probably owing to the ardour and high pressure under which it was conceived. But the drollest part of the incident was that the supplanted writer was not to be so disposed of. It is impossible to make an author conclude or wind up his story against his will. He might plead that his story will not give him leave to do so, and that he was helpless. Curiously "Harry Lorrequer" kept to his post week after week actively for *five* long months, finishing in March, 1861.

It was a most fortunate result that "Great Expectations"—there can be no doubt of it—added greatly to Dickens's already great reputation. It was indeed a quite new departure, and as he explained to his friend and confidant, he wished to revive his old unlicensed humour, and this he actually did with happiest result and effect.*

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* It was afterwards issued in the orthodox three-volume shape. This, with *Oliver Twist*, was the only work of Dickens that appeared in this shape. Collectors and dealers find it all but impossible to meet three volumes of the same "set" and equally impossible to get clean copies. This is curiously accounted for by the fact that they were "in circulation" at the libraries, and consequently too well thumbed and dirtied. The volumes of the set bceame mixed, and could not be "matched" again, as single volumes were given out to readers.

As we read of these things—the huge difficulties surmounted and his brilliant devices—we must yet more and more admire our author's capable and resourceful spirit and his unbounded energies. During the whole twenty years' service he was the toiling, never-flagging workman, ever at his post. He never delegated to others. Thackeray very soon tired of his editorship. Dickens never even sank into the conventional "rut" or dull, habitual course. His busy fancy and invention were always at work with new devices and plans. I must repeat that without these volumes no one can have an idea of his true character and what he did in his life.

With the change in the form of the old journal there was now to be noted a change in the character of its contents. The new venture seemed to be less personal and to concede more to the humour of the times. There was less of the one prevailing tone; the old tranquil, home-like flavour gave place to one more conventional. This, it may be suspected, was owing to a lack of interest in its director, who, perhaps a little fatigued by his nine years' labours, was now absorbed in his laborious "Readings," and was obliged occasionally, at least, to leave the routine duties to others, not that he in the least relaxed in his efforts. He continued—as I know from evidence of my own proofs—to select and correct diligently with the old care; packets of printed matter followed him about; but the treatment was hardly so minute as before. However this may be, the *All the Year Round* is less attractive than its predecessor, though "more up to date."

But now came a disturbing element abroad which he could not ignore. Thackeray had long been before the town, and "Vanity Fair" had won its success some years before *Household Words* had appeared. But now thirteen years had passed, and there could be no question but that the newer writer was steadily gaining. He had the advantage that his style and treatment were directly opposed to that of Dickens—more of a novelty, too. Boz all this time may have had suspicion of some coming venture likely to interfere with his own, but it must have been a shock at least when he learnt that his "rival" or opponent was actually coming down into the open field to confront him with a magazine of his own. This speedily took important commercial shape. It was a publishers' venture; they were well found in means, and were likely to make it a flourishing undertaking. The *Cornhill* magazine was accordingly started on the old magazine lines, with additions after Dickens's pattern, such as the serial story and the personal, confidential article called "Roundabout Papers." The coincidence of the "rival" magazines can be shown by dates, and is rather remarkable. Dickens's second journal made its first appearance on April 30th, 1859, and just eight months later, in January, 1860, the orange covers of the *Cornhill* were seen on the stalls.*

It was now difficult for the public not to contrast the two men as editors. We have seen, and are still seeing, what a "whole-souled" editor *he* was. It is notorious the "rival" was of a rather cold and self-contained sort. He put nothing of his personality into the body of the thing, but reserved the interest for the special "full-dress" display of himself in the "Roundabout" article, where he posed as the pleasant cynic. He took little or no trouble about the rest, except consulting or suggesting in a general way.

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* In another book, *The Life of Charles Dickens, revealed in his Works,* I have shown in detail how strangely Thackeray adopted and adapted passages and ideas from Boz's stories.

It was, in fact, a magazine on the old plan, but it had an extraordinary success, as I well remember — a new editor and writer, the new novelist, and the new format. There could be no doubt it was altogether a most agreeable production, and well "up to date," and I could imagine Boz rather ruefully contemplating his own somewhat conventional journal, to which he had struggled so hard to impart something novel, with this effect only —

> "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose,"

which might be rendered—

> "Go! change and change your little game:
> Change as you will, 'twill be the same."

I do not propose to follow the whole ten years' course of *All the Year Round* in detail, for the reason that it was more rather than less conventional, and had not exhibited the old, free Dickensian flavour. It followed on the usual magazine lines—perhaps was compelled to do so. I may say I took a great share in it, suggesting subjects, writing many a long three-volume novel,* going on special missions to Rome and other places when there was anything of interest on foot; such as the completion and opening of Cologne Cathedral, after some hundred years interruption, a picturesque spectacle. During this period I did nothing but write for the paper and cultivate my intimacy with its genial director.

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* Here was some of my heavier literary baggage: *Never Forgotten*, a novel in three volumes; *The Second Mrs. Tillotson*, in three volumes; *The Dear Girl*, in two volumes; *The Bridge of Sighs*, one volume; *Howard's Son*, one volume; *Fatal Zero*, one volume; *Roman Candles*, one volume, etc.

CHAPTER XIV

SIR E. BULWER LYTTON'S NOVEL

BUT presently the conductor was preparing a *coup* of a very bold and striking kind. This he fondly imagined would give a powerful impulse to the progress of his journal—a bold "spring forward"—that would repair deficiencies. The idea was well conceived, though it was to prove unsuccessful. Of late he had been renewing relations with an old and distinguished contemporary, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, who had recently risen, as it were, from a sort of oblivion and old fashion, and entered on a fresh course of popularity. This eminent novelist, politician, poet, satirist, dramatist, orator—rare combination of gifts—would surely bring prestige and profit to the journal, to say nothing of the brilliant combination. He proceeded, accordingly, to plan the arrangement. The whole makes a most interesting literary episode, and I propose to set it out in this place, having in my possession all the materials.*

All through this gifted pair were associated in a very interesting way, starting on their course together, almost at the same moment, of nearly the same age, and both capturing the town when each was no more than twenty, with a novel of extraordinary spirit and brilliancy, one with *Pelham* and the other with

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* The interesting correspondence that follows on the subject of the story—interesting from the occasion and co-operation of two such writers—came into my possession many years ago. Sir Edward's portion at least has never been published.

Pickwick the immortal. Both were to have most successful careers as novelists, and belonged to the great quartet of story-tellers which distinguished the Victorian Era, namely Bulwer Lytton, Dickens, Thackeray, and Charles Reade. They might be said to have all but lost sight of each other.

At the end of the year 1860 Boz, as we have seen, had been writing what some have held to be one of his greatest stories, "Great Expectations," and had been burdened with Lever's "broken-down" "A Day's Tour," whose close he seemed to herald with a sort of exultation, announcing in special capitals that it would be *concluded* on such a day! It was at this crisis that he bethought him of his old friend. He had learned that he was actually busy with a romance, and at once applied to him for his assistance. His friend responded cordially, clearly feeling that such an alliance would be of great advantage to both. Dickens, ever sanguine and generously enthusiastic, was perfectly enchanted, and broke into a sort of rapture of enthusiasm, which was to be long sustained. Alas! he was to be presently—as he was so often—disillusioned.

At that time Bulwer Lytton was a strangely reserved and altogether remarkable man, but most interesting and even romantic. I was privileged to know him, to talk with him. He was ever a sort of patron to me in literary matters, and—I say it at the risk of ridicule—he was actually a very cordial admirer of what I wrote. I never sought his appreciation or inflicted my stories on him; but he was a rather promiscuous, omnivorous reader, and read most of the current things that came from the press.

The author expected to be ready to start his story in the July or August of 1861. Artist as he was, he had stipulated with his friend that he was not to begin to read the work until a substantial portion had been printed. "I swear," cried the generous Dickens, "that I never thought I had half so much self-denial as I have shown in this case." In May he read the sheets, and, as he told his friend, "I *could not* lay them aside last night, but was obliged to go on with them in my bedroom, until I got into a very ghostly state indeed."

It is surprising that it did not occur to him that his new client would be scarcely suited to the rather sober tastes of readers of his journal. Now Sir Edward, it was well known, had strange, exaggerated views of a personal kind as to "psychic force," supernatural dealings, and the like, and seems to have shown that he had a strong faith in such matters. This might give his friend pause. It was astonishing that so sagacious a judge as Boz did not at once see the unsuitability for the audience of a tale founded on such Utopian dreams and speculations.

Dickens, however, continued so eagerly enthusiastic in his project that these objections never occurred to him. Soon all was settled. As the proofs came in due course to Dickens he could scarcely restrain his raptures of applause. It is not surprising, however, that even to the author, when the proofs passed before him, the dark, Rosicrucian cast of his narrative now began to suggest doubts. These he even suggested to his friend and editor; but the eager Dickens was not to be daunted, and reassured his friend in almost rapturous terms.

"I am delighted," he wrote on January 23rd, 1861, "to receive your letter, and look forward to have such a successor in August. I can honestly assure you that I never have been so pleased at heart in all my literary life as I am in the proud thought of standing side by side with you before this great audience. I have perfect faith in such a master hand as yours. I know that what such an artist feels to be terrible and original is unquestionably so. You whet my interest by what you write of it to the utmost extent." Then turning to the Rosicrucian doubts: "As to the question whether there is any foundation for the misgiving, I do not share it in the least. Readers who had given their minds, or perhaps had any to give, to these strange, psychological mysteries in ourselves, will accept your wonders as curious weapons in the armoury of fiction, and will submit themselves to the art with which said weapons are used."

And again:—

12th May.

"Of the beauty and power of the writing I say nto a word, or of its originality and boldness, or of its quite extraordinary constructive skill. I confine myself solely to your misgiving. I say without hesitation most decidedly there is *not* sufficient foundation for it." He believed that readers would submit themselves to his art. The narrations in such skilful hands would overpower them. If he was the magician's servant things would get the better of him, but being a magician himself, etc. Further, he seriously impressed upon his friend that it was very desirable "to have these points presented to the reader's mind," namely that the audience is good enough for anything that is well presented to it. But he urged him to avoid *notes* and get their substance into the text, as the "audience would scarcely understand them."*

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* It must be said that the notion of notes to a story was a most disagreeable trial for the reader. Such references as, say, "*See Lipsius, cap,*" so and so, and followed by a recondite discussion, had the *queerest* air, and was enough to frighten away any save the student.

By January, 1861, all was settled. The story was to be ready in August. All through the negotiations Dickens showed himself truly generous as he was impulsive, and perfectly lavish in his praises. By the end of April he had written to Sir Edward, warning him to be ready by the last week in July. "Everything favoured, as 'Great Expectations' had been most successful in its run," and opened the way. So eager was he to have the proofs that he hurried the printers on. He spoke of the beauty and power of the writing. He then suggested that "A Romance" should be a sub-title, for he had an exquisite *flaire* for such delicacies. But he did not quite like the title, "Dr. Fenwick, a Strange Story," and suggested a few others, such as "The Steel Casket," "The Lost MS.," "Derval Court," "Perpetual Youth," "Maggie," "Dr. Fenwick," "Life and Death." The four last he thought the best. Still, Dr. Fenwick suggested "Dr. Antonio, a Popular Novel." "Fenwick" was not startling enough, but the title must be settled at once.

The hints and suggestions of this practised, well-skilled story-teller were well worth considering, for, as he said, "by dint of necessity and practice he had become rather cunning in arranging chapters, etc." There should be no title for the town—the scene of action—but the author might state at the opening that he gave the town a fictitious name, as he himself actually did in *Edwin Drood.* He added this acute remark: "I suppose a blank or a dash rather fends a good many people off; it always has that effect on me." Again he fell into praises: "The story a fine one, such as no other man could write." Recurring to the title, he said, "'Margrave, a Tale of Mystery,' would be sufficiently striking. I prefer 'Wonder' to 'Mystery,' because I think it suggests something higher and more apart from ordinary complications of plot or the like, which 'Mystery' might seem to mean." (This title was certainly better than the one chosen.) "Will you kindly remark that the title presses, and that it will be a great relief to have it as soon as possible." We can fancy what a trial this nervous, uncertain, fidgeting man was to his friend Boz, dreaming over his great work, and thinking the change of a single word all important.

And again, towards the end of December, 1861, he wrote: "I have *read*, and I say most masterly and most admirable! It is impossible to lay the sheets down without finishing them. I showed them to Georgina and Mary, and they read and never stirred till they had read all. There cannot be a doubt of the beauty, power and artistic excellence of the whole." He cautions him against giving "explanations beyond the title-page and motto unless it may be in a very brief preface."

It is sad to say that all this panegyric was altogether delusive! Boz, in a strong fit of regard and admiration, had persuaded himself into believing that his friend had contrived all these marvels of genius. They are not really present. The work is very much in the slow-moving, ponderous style of "The Disowned," being sadly dull and far-fetched, which proves that the author's instincts were a little confused and faint. Very interesting and instructive also are the discussions that followed between these experienced "hands" on points of treatment relating to their craft. Thus we find Bulwer writing, as in time his doubts as to the interest of the subject recurred:—

April 2nd, 1861.

My dear Dickins,*

I am just returned to England. Now that the first ardour is cooled I have some doubts as to the effect of my tale on the public, and I should like you and perhaps Forster to judge; for if it should be of questionable popularity or effect, I should have come between this and then, and write another. Would it too much lock up your type to print a good portion of it—on slips—to be kept by for the present, on the condition, of course, that if it be not used I pay the expense of the printing? If it would lock up your type too much, I might still make use of your printer. I think it is scarcely possible to judge of a doubtful work in MS. My doubts are not as to the force of the writing, but the nature of the subject. The leading philosophical idea is this . . . To show what the results would be if he had possessed physical power in a degree even more than ordinarily human but without soul, and so tend to prove the relation of soul to human organisation. In the way in which this is treated much of what is called the supernatural is employed. But in order to render this supernatural element more probable, the tale is told by a sceptical medical man, who wrestles against the images presented to him, and who balances the doubt which he keeps constantly before the reader even if all these are not delusions of his own fancy and cheats of the senses. The incidents and misconceptions are original. The whole may go too much against the grain of the reader. It is my object to give you as good a thing for your paper as I can write, and my fear is that it may not exactly suit so wide an audience. I think if one could get a third printed off one could judge this at once. I have not yet seen the journal since I left England. I shall have to do so when I get to London.

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* It will be seen that this strange being had not yet learned even the correct spelling of his old friend's name, as well as that of the deputy. There is something farcical in this "Dickins" and "Willes." (See p. 216.) It must have given Boz a hearty laugh.]

Here was a disquieting programme and a strange foundation for a story. Moreover, it must have been rather worrying for Boz to find himself involved with this uncertain and "fidgety" man. It will be seen what a state of doubt the author continued in, as to whether the "occult" subject would be acceptable or "go down," though Dickens did what he could to dispel his anxieties. But the author was to prove to be right, the other's kindly sympathies leading him astray. Another difficulty for all concerned must have been the hopeless scrawl, utterly undecipherable without infinite pains and trouble, his letters becoming a ceaseless puzzle. His correspondence continues:

My dear Dickins,

I wrote to Willes to request the advertisement to substitute Author of "My Novel," etc., for my Name. I think it was understood and agreed—I never do put my Name to my Novels on their first appearance. But it comes to exactly the same thing, if it be put by the Author of Books which the Public knows to be mine.

Would it not be well to change the day of Meeting for the Guild from Monday 17th on which day you know you will be with me. I expect you Saturday 15th by 5 o'clock Train from King's Cross—with Miss Hogarth and Miss Dickins (*sic*). I will send the Carriage to meet you, and I trust you will at least stay over Wednesday. I have asked a few pleasant people to meet you, and also some agreeable Country Neighbours to come and dine. I am hard at work on Fenwick, the earlier part of which I shall entirely rewrite. I shall give Willes the 1st No. on Saturday if he call. I fear it will be long, but it ought to have the end it now has after Dr. Lloyd's Deathbed, which I have, I think, heightened and improved.

Yours ever,

E. B. L.

Thursday Night.

Would you like some other of your children to come ? I have plenty of room.

The name of the novel was still unsettled. Boz must have been distracted by his friend's uncertainty and hesitation in the matter.

MY DEAR DICKINS,

I am writing my view as to sketching in a new character or so, and I think improving and heightening the intent—according to your hints. I suspect I have done a little more than one additional number ; commencing very early No. 2. I am not satisfied with "Margrave, a Tale of Wonder," but have been incessantly racking my brains for a better. The only 3 worth sending you out of a large number that as yet have occurred to me are 1st :

"A Strange Story."
By the Author of
"My Novel," "Rienzi," etc.

"A Strange Story" has some advantages. I have precedent in the "Simple Story," it is modest and quiet ; suggests much and reveals nothing.

2nd, "Margrave, or the Criminous Shadow" (!).
A tale by, etc.

3rd, "The Seekers,"
A Romance by, etc.

I might add that I don't like it much.

"Is and Is Not."
A tale by, etc.

And again :—

MY DEAR DICKINS,

Your packet received and shall be attended. Did you read from "Australian" to end, and will the Catastrophe do ? My queries here would be these—

whether Fenwick should be allowed to grow old and Isabel die. For the meaning of the story these seemed to me necessary.

My idea at present of general alterations would be 1st to enlarge on Fenwick's early love to Isabel; scenes and dialogues before Margrave's appearance; and make Vigor somehow present to them. Vigor might speak of Louis Groyle, of his strange death, etc., and prepare reader for Margrave, as well as serve to dispense with Groyle's story to Sir P. Duval.

Thus 2 Numbers might be added.

Doubtful if Margrave should be introduced to Isabel, and scenes between him, Fenwick, Isabel, short. I propose at present to retain all the particulars that lead Fenwick on.

The opening chapters were looked for, of course, with interest and curiosity. Dickens presently was writing to the author that "the circulation was maintained,* Forster enormously impressed." Then came more amiable compliments. "I am burning to get at the whole story, and you inflame me in the maddest manner by your reference to what I don't know. The exquisite touches with which the changes had been made fairly staggered me."

At last the great venture, so much debated and prepared for, was ready, and the first portion issued on August 10th, 1861. At first there was the interest which was to be expected, the circulation was increased, and the story debated and talked of.† All the hoardings and the walls flamed out with the orange and red placards in more than their usual profusion. But it "would not do." The public could not stand the dreary Rosicrucian wanderings and meditations, and poor Dickens was once more to be disappointed. Here were two successive failures. The "Strange Story" had to pursue its weary course, and the Editor continuously to assure his public that it really would "end in March." In that month, to the relief of everybody, it was finished. It seriously affected the circulation, and no wonder; for what could be expected when the author would supply notes with quotations from "the great Newton" and other recondite writers on mysterious subjects. Nay, he would add a special "note" to expound some obscure passage that had gone before, and which he fancied had been misunderstood by his readers. This in a novel! But where were Boz's early raptures now? He had only repeatedly to announce that Wilkie Collins was at hand with his new story.

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* The news that "the circulation was maintained" was scarcely encouraging, but I fancy Boz meant that an increased circulation, announced to be some 1,500 copies, had not gone down.

† I fancy the price the author received was no more than £1,000 "for passage through the journal." More would not have "paid" the Editor.

CHAPTER XV

THE AUTHOR'S SERIALS

It will be seen from the details I have been giving that I was deep in "the secrets of the Prison House," and most familiar with all the workings and mysteries of the enterprise. Both the Editor and his deputy would confidentially reveal to me their various plans and purposes. But my own share in the enterprise, I may be allowed to say, was on an important scale, and scarcely one of the whole following contributed nearly as much.

A single serial in an important magazine is a great promotion for the contributor. It proves that there is a belief in the directing mind that he has both power and promise, and is therefore likely to attract. If he be untried, it proves the editor's faith, for there is the risk of failure and of damage to the magazine. But it is rare that the favoured contributor is offered a *second* opening or re-appearance. Such untried hands sometimes do respectably, but more often fail, and in such case are not again invited; but even in cases of fair success, the editor is disinclined to renew the experiment, as he is looking for variety. Dickens's system, however, was to find a writer whose style and treatment quite suited the peculiar taste of his readers, and then he was glad to open the door to him for a second trial. But here again he sometimes was sadly disappointed. Once there was an admirable short story in several "portions," which absolutely enchanted him, and which he enthusiastically invited his friends to read and admire as much as he did. It was called "The Tale of Aunt Margaret's Trouble," and was indeed a most artistic performance, describing incidents of a domestic kind, and written by a lady. This was looked upon as a huge "find," and the authoress was speedily commissioned to write a novel on the larger scale, and *à longue haleine.* It proved, however, that she had not the "staying power," and the result was certainly a failure.

As I said before, a single serial was a handsome compliment; yet in course of time I came to write no less than five or six, my last beginning on the very eve of Dickens's death. It may be that there is no other writer who has thus written what may be termed a *series* of serials, and for the same editor and paper.* I may indeed add, and I hope it will not be thought vainglorious, but I really believe that I was a sort of resource, and kept in reserve; for I find Dickens, when he was in a difficulty as to a suitable story, writing to his assistant, "Perhaps Fitzgerald has something ready by him."†

It was in the same speculative way that Wilkie Collins was found and brought forward. He had produced a short novel, "The Dead Secret," which showed much of his mystical power, and attracted, and so was called in to renew the flagging interest with his once famous "Woman in White." This happy *coup* did wonders for the magazine, and the weekly portions were read—"devoured" almost—with an absorbing interest. It was, of course, followed up by others, "No Name," "Armadale," etc.

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* For these productions, as I calculate, I must have received about £2,000, no inferior guerdon for a comparatively obscure writer. Boz was indeed the most liberal of men. He insisted on paying, even for articles that he did not make use of. Once, when I positively declined this bounty, he sent me a full set of all his works.

† In Mr. Lehmann's work.

Now I think I may rather plume myself on the fact that I and this popular novelist were the only two writers who during that long span of twenty years were repeatedly called upon to furnish stories, and that I really supplied as many serials as did my gifted coadjutor. I was, besides, all the time supplementing the serials with innumerable papers on all and every occasional subject. It was certainly a season of amazing exertion and activity, but what a delightful one; and all the while was going on the pleasant inner life, with repeated "Come down to us at Gads"—so he would abbreviate—"and bring a bag with you."

A wonderful piece of fortune led to the supplying of my first serial. I once begged of him as a favour to let me "try my hand." "To be sure," he cried, and I did so accordingly in a one-volume shape. He sent it off to the printers without reading it, so as "to give it every chance." But it would not exactly suit. I must try again; and the good-natured Editor added, "As you have it all in type now, it will be easier to arrange for it." However, my appearance in the coveted columns of the journal was not long delayed. A story called *Bella Donna* had made some impression, and had reached its second edition. Boz, who was eminently receptive of anything novel, was much pleased with it. The heroine was a sort of "Becky Sharpe," and I carried her safely through no less than three separate novels, *Bella Donna, Jenny Bell,* and *Seventy-five Brooke Street.* Jenny's death at the close, I was told by Dickens, affected him deeply, and "struck him as one of the most powerful things he had read for long," as he told a friend. It is a risk mentioning such a thing, but I must record it, for such a man's praise is worth recording.

It was a delightful and encouraging day when I found myself promoted, and formally commissioned to supply a "full dress" story. Everything was done to encourage, and five hundred pounds promised. I set to work to devise a plot, a most difficult, nervous thing; but then was I not assured of the vigilant co-operation of our inspired chief? The idea occurred to me of two sisters, one the watchful guardian of the younger one, the precious jewel of her eye, but whose affections were gained by an artful Philanderer, who grew tired of her, and left her to waste away and die. The plot then turned on the reckless efforts of the survivor to hunt down and punish the *murderer*, as she thought him.*

The interesting points were the consultations with the Editor. First the outline of the plot was submitted, debated, and improved; then a goodly portion printed off, revised, altered wholly, and portions cancelled.

Dickens's handwriting always offered an extraordinary revelation of his character. It was so "prompt," so alert, finished, and full of purpose and decision; legible also, but requiring familiarity and training to read. As we look at the manuscript of his stories, with their crowded lines and intricate corrections, we must admire the cleverness of the printers, who, however, learned his "ways" perfectly. How curious, too, was that fancy of his for the blue paper and blue ink, which clung to him till his death; so much so, that the rare letter written on white paper and with black ink seems almost "unnatural" and uncongenial. But in any letter of his the writing, superscription, signature, paper, ink and the rest, were all in character, and seldom varied. The contrast of his script with the tottering, quavering scrawl of his old friend Bulwer was astonishing.

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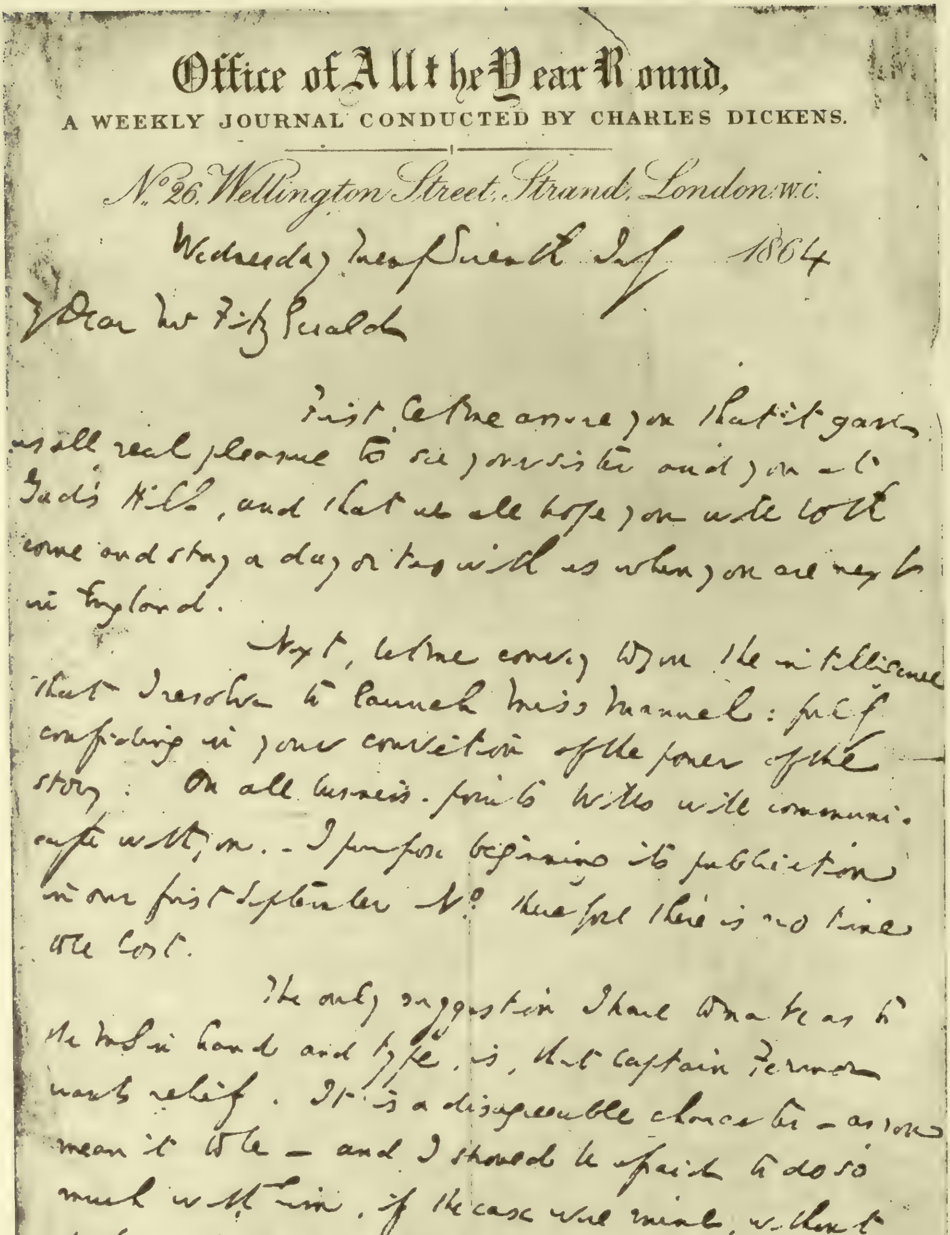
* This character, "Captin Fermor," was elaborately studied, and drawn from a person I knew, a man of extraordinary cleverness and ineffable conceit, and to whom some one—out of malice, I suspect—sent the book that he might recognise himself. It was an awkward moment when, one day, looking at himself in the pier glass, he said carelessly, "Do you know, it struck me once or twice that there was something in *Fermor* rather like me?" I could only murmur, "O, nonsense," and he seemed to agree that the notion was too far-fetched.

Earlier in this book I have quoted his interesting letter of suggestions as to the treatment of this story of mine, and it is reproduced here in facsimile. In the course of writing half a dozen of such serials I had many similar ones, all full of valuable criticisms; but these I cannot find, though they must exist and are "somewhere." Alas! I notice that a great man's letters are rarely taken sufficient care of until after his death, for it is assumed that the fountain will be always flowing. I may again call attention to one invaluable criticism as a specimen of many others:

"The only suggestion I have to make as to the MS. in hand and type is that Captain Fermor wants relief. It is a disagreeable character, as you mean it to be, and I should be afraid to do so much with him, if the case were mine, without taking the taste of him here and there out of the reader's mouth. It is remarkable that if you do not administer a disagreeable character carefully, the public will have a decided tendency to think that the story is disagreeable, and not merely the fictitious person."

What an interesting analysis is here. What delicate touches of criticism as to the treatment of character. Here are words of counsel and wisdom from "a past master" in his art. What instruction, and, it may be



Office of All the Year Round,
A WEEKLY JOURNAL CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.
No. 26, Wellington Street, Strand, London, W.C.

Wednesday Twentieth July 1864

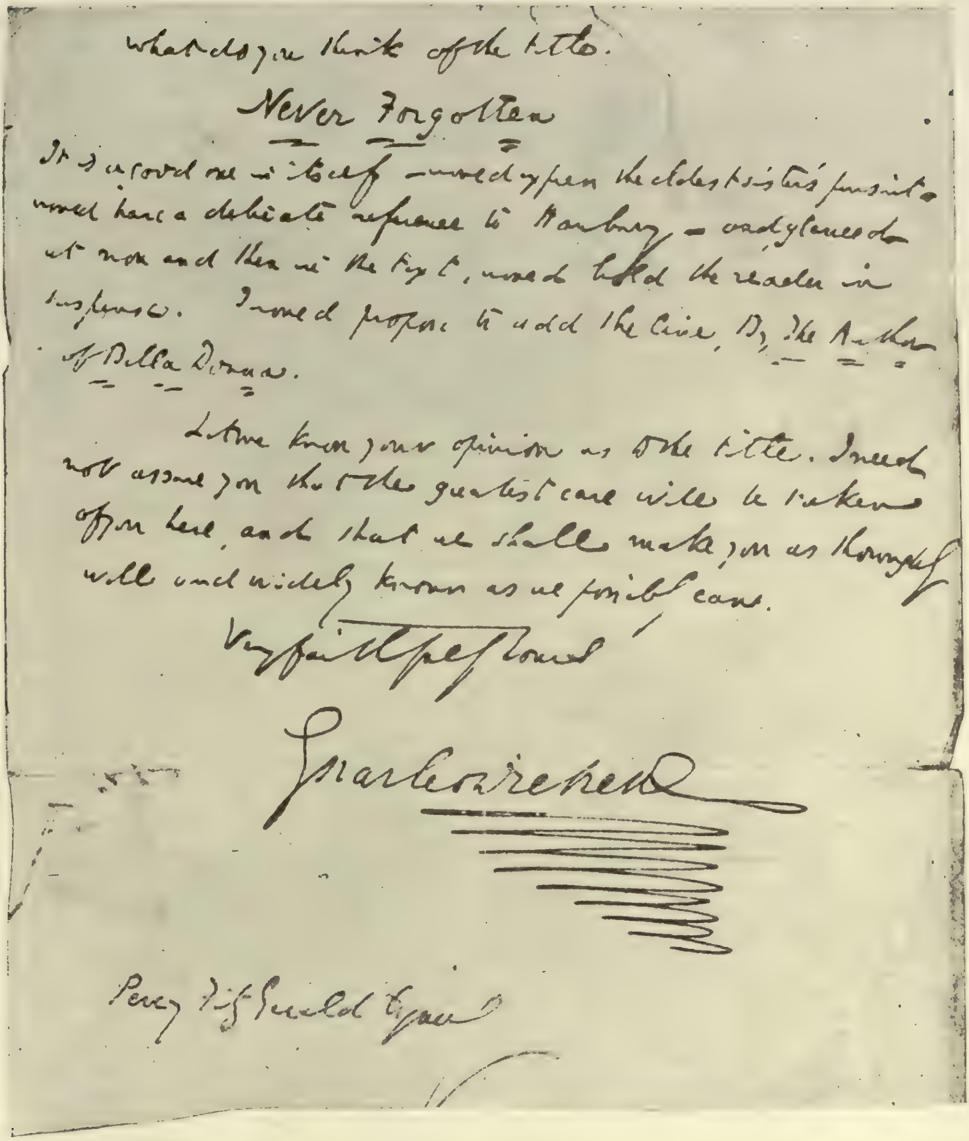
My Dear Mr Fitz Gerald

First, let me assure you that it gave us all real pleasure to see your sister and you at Gad's Hill, and that we all hope you will both come and stay a day or two with us when you are next in England.

Next, let me convey to you the intelligence that I resolve to launch Miss Manuel: fully confiding in your conviction of the power of the story. On all business-points Wills will communicate with you. - I propose beginning its publication in our first September No. therefore there is no time to be lost.

The only suggestion I have to make as to the MS in hand and type, is, that Captain Fermor wants relief. It is a disagreeable character - as you mean it to be - and I should be afraid to do so much with him, if the case were mine, without taking the taste of him, here and there, out of the reader's mouth. It is remarkable that if you do not administer a disagreeable character carefully, the public have a decided tendency to think that the whole story is disagreeable, and not merely the particular person.

FACSIMILE OF LETTER



What do you think of the title.

Never Forgotten

It is a good one in itself — would open the eldest sister's pursuit — would have a delicate reference to Hanbury — would glance out now and then in the text, would hold the reader in suspense. I would propose to add the line, By the Author of Bella Donna.

Let me know your opinion as to the title. I need not assure you that the greatest care will be taken of you here, and that we shall make you as thoroughly well and widely known as we possibly can.

Very faithfully yours

Charles Dickens

Percy Fitzgerald Esquire

FROM CHARLES DICKENS TO PERCY FITZGERALD.

added, what modest, deferential advice to a mere neophyte. Did I profit by it? Alas! I fear I was then in the fullness of *gaieté de cœur*, youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm—not pausing to think, perpend, and inwardly digest so kind a mentor's most precious sayings.

Dickens was gifted in most ways, and knew how to carry out his purposes in the most perfect style. Thus his system of "posters" for his papers was a truly striking one. He had devised a party-coloured "livery" of the most flamboyant kind—placards on a rich golden orange ground with black and red lettering. These imposing bills were nigh six feet long, and when he was announcing a new serial they "broke out" all over the kingdom. I never shall forget the sort of delighted shock I experienced when, walking through the good city of Chester, I saw one of these announcements heralding my new story "Never Forgotten," and proclaiming the first number for a certain date. Here is fame, thought I.

"Never Forgotten" proved a reasonable success. In book form it passed through several editions, and is still on sale. There is a good deal of Boz's work in it—on every page sentences of his composition, happy, little turns, quips and cranks, which pointed the narrative. But a "galley slip" of Boz's was amazing. It suggested a blue network spread over the printed lines, the blank spaces on the sides full of crowded writing, whole paragraphs "deleted," all this representing very considerable cost. For he cared nothing for the limits of "over-running," and would insert lines and sentences for which room could only be found by "dislocating" many inches of type.

Boz was much "arrided," to use Elia's happy phrase, by an incident connected with this story. An eminent firm of perfumers, seeing everywhere on the hoardings "Never Forgotten," with Boz's name below in richly black letters on an orange ground, devised a new perfume, and named it after the story. They sent me a little case of the bottles, which I, as in duty bound, shared with my chief, though he was indeed entitled to the whole.

As I have said before, it was a delightful, as it was an unusual, thing to have to do with an editor who was not merely practical and workmanlike in his office, but grew eager and enthusiastic over his own workman's productions. He would write and talk eagerly on the merits of some particular story, importuning almost his friends to read it.

Thus once at Hamburg, in 1869, before the extinction of the gambling, I had been watching for nearly a month all the dramatic incidents of the play, and amused myself by working them up into a very tragic novel. He was immensely pleased with it. As we look through his letters of that date, we shall find him eagerly urging his friends: "Read *Fatal Zero,* you will find it a story of extraordinary interest, developing as it goes on." And he would write to me constantly, reporting favourable opinions: "Wilkie thinks it powerful, etc." It continued its course for some months, and has been reprinted several times.

CHAPTER XVI

SOME OF THE AUTHOR'S JOURNALISTIC EXPERIENCES. HUMOURS AND WHIMS OF EDITING. THE LOSS OF WILLS AND OF ARTHUR SMITH. "THE UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELLER." SUPPRESSION OF "THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER." THE NEW SERIES.

In the springtime of 1860, when there was much talk of Rome and Romans and Roman changes, a daring scheme came into my head, and I casually suggested to my kind patron that I should go out and "do" what was going on in the Eternal City. To my surprise and pleasure he gave his consent. I was to go and look about me with a free hand, and supply as many papers as I chose to send. That was indeed an enchanting time. I fell in with some friends, who had the *entrée* everywhere and saw everything, Holy Week Rites included. I often think since, with much compunction, that it was not exactly reverent to apply the free and easy *All the Year Round* methods to the City of the Holy See, and that I gave too much freedom to my *frondeur* pen. But this did not occur to me at the time, and the rather reckless spirit of the journal, with the wish to produce, led me on. The sketches were well received, and copied into *The Times*, in spite of their exaggeration.

In March, 1861, all the world was reading the absorbing dramatic details of "the Yelverton Marriage

Case,"* now long forgotten. But what "a pother" at the moment! The heroine had attracted all sympathies from her demeanour and the harsh treatment she had suffered, and had gained the hearts of the Irish barristers as well as of the judge who tried the case, the late Chief Justice Monahan. The trial was an extraordinary scene from the partisanship displayed on all sides. Had the "counsellors" worn swords these must have, according to the historic phrase, "leaped from their scabbards." Having been present all through, I wrote for *All the Year Round* a vivid picture of the varied scenes and emotions, under the title supplied by Dickens, "An Unexamined Witness on the Great Marriage Case." Here the leading counsel were limned—the brilliant, impetuous Whiteside as Brightside, Q.C., and the late Mr. Brewster disrespectfully dubbed as "Whitewhisker"—he represented the "villain of the piece." The sketch was copied into all the local prints, read all over the kingdom. Of these portraits one gained for me the "eternal friendship" of the first, while the second did not exactly win for me the partiality of his rival. Whiteside, like all mercurial spirits, was sensitive, eager for praise to the last moment of his life. He was certainly an interesting man, from his perpetual juvenile buoyancy. The lady was Teresa Longworth, highly-strung and comporting herself as an interesting victim. She clung to Mr. Whiteside, and I suspect was rather an inconvenient burden. A heroine is often a rather troublesome person. It was impossible, however, not to feel pity for her sad case and cruel fate. All the tumult and sympathy of the Irish trial went for nothing, for the verdict was "upset" by the House of Lords on a point of law, I think. The shoutings of the mob were but an unsubstantial guerdon, to say nothing of the street ballads, in which were some memorable lines:—

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* At this moment few, except lawyers and students will recall the incidents of this exciting cause, which turned on the secret marriage of the son of a noble house—the Avonmores—with a young Roman Catholic heroine. As a Romish priest had performed the ceremony—an offence against the law at the time—the husband repudiated the bond.

> "Long life unto the Jury
>   Which brought the vardict home
> Because she was a mimber
>   Of the Holy Church of Rome!"

I knew her, and have some of her letters. She was induced to write a novel on the strength of her position, and Bentley gave her a substantial sum for her *Martyrs to Circumstances.* But it had little merit.

This faculty of seizing on "the cynosure of the moment and *at* the psychological moment" was, I believe, what gained me the favour and encouragement of our chief. The device of setting enticing and alluring headings to each paper, having also quaint double meanings, was carried to the extreme and cultivated by all his "followers." It was thought all-important, and it was believed that the reader was caught and influenced. Even the admirable Boz himself had the most intense faith in such devices. And yet it was but a deceptive and theatrical system. A clever paper was not considered clever enough unless it received some title of this kind, which all the time was a deceptive one. It was on the principle of the showy poster in the street. The reader is "trapped" by the title, but undeceived as he finishes his perusal. I always recoiled from this "headings" system. I remember having written a book which had passed through the journal, and the worthy Wills suggested that he should have the proofs, engaging to furnish every one of the two hundred pages with an appropriate "heading!" It was a long and laborious job, and it was good-natured of him.

Here is a specimen of the flippant sketches I was concerned in. Dealing with the great sartorial sumptuousness of the Third Empire, I ventured on a comic sketch of the once famous Worth, under the title of

"THE GREAT MAN-MILLINER!"

The description was certainly contemptuous. He was described as a humble tailor in an English provincial town. The success of the man was astounding. His talk with his clients, all imaginary, was made grotesque. There was a suggestion, though remote, of the Editor's own now far-off Mantalini of immortal memory. Whatsoever he was he had a dignified temper, and showed a noble indifference to calumnious reports. They did not touch *him*, because they could not touch his success, so he contented himself with simply calling attention to an inaccuracy. Boz put it all right in his own way:

> "*Note* on 'The Great Man-Milliner.'—We have been asked to state that Mr. Worth, of Paris, *whose proficiency in the millinery art* was described at page 564 of our last volume, did not begin life as a tailor, but as 'an apprentice to one of the most celebrated silk mercers in the West-End of London.'"

We can see the roguish eyes of Boz twinkling as no other eyes could as he wrote these pleasant lines.

Often in the case of some tragic catastrophe he would make an expedition to the scene itself, and expend all the powers of his heart and talent in setting forth a tale of suffering and sorrow, so as to excite general sympathy, using all as a text for setting forth the virtues of the poor. Who will forget such an effort which he made on the occurrence of a dreadful wreck on the Welsh coast and his touching treatment of the matter, his special visit to the place, his talks with the unhappy relatives, the piteous letters. No one but Dickens himself could supply this sort of thing, and no one but Dickens would receive the same attention. Hence the overpowering *personality* which pervaded his journal and gave it its *cachet* or hall-mark.

In April, 1863, I chanced to be concerned in a murder trial, in which the accused was convicted in a strange way by a watch, to gain which a murder had been committed, and which had stopped at a particular hour, when the murdered man had been flung into the water. The story, called *The Fatal Watch*, made an impression on Dickens, and I always fancy that when he came to deal with the murder in *Edwin Drood* it recurred to his memory. An article on South African gold, in which the "rowdiness" of the workers was described, drew forth what Dickens called "a tempered remonstrance," which he accepted in his always equitable spirit, withdrawing the charges as against *the whole* community. Then followed a long series of "letters" to the Lord Chamberlain, the reports of a volunteer commissioner, dealing with the treatment of music halls, and theatres, March, 1869.

As he lost his dear and early friends one by one, Dickens usually paid each an affectionate tribute in his journal, and in his own effective and telling style. But there were degrees in the force and warmth of these little sketches. This it is that gives such a value to these retrospective communings, and reveals to us the affectionate heart of the writer. There is one in particular where this affection seems unbounded, for he had lost what, it is believed, was the one he loved best—even beyond the trusty Forster. This was Stanfield, the painter, a man of a simple nature, and utterly without affectation—"Stanny," as he was affectionately called. Not less simple and heartfelt is Dickens's epitaph, written with all his grace. The truth was, the painter was his favourite, and he loved and trusted him more than any. Another of these most affectionate notices was the one devoted to his old friend Talfourd, who died suddenly when actually on the Bench. These loving tributes, coming from the heart, are full of true feeling and affection, and hallow his journal.

Boz could wield his pen with much sarcasm and many a witty gibe. It is singular to find such severity in so "mild a mannered man." He could not resist also making his opponent out as absurd a figure as possible. How he lashed the Pre-Raphaelites, what fun he made of them, though one of them was destined to be his son-in-law!

And there was one body against which he and his friend, the doughty John Forster, waged an unrelenting war for many years. This was the Literary Fund, which the pair even insisted was conducted on a "jobbing" or inefficient system. It was wonderful the spirit with which they carried on the contest. They attended the meetings and moved resolutions, and were always voted down. Boz, we may be sure, did not spare them in his own journal, and I possess an animated "slashing" pamphlet (very rare) which he and his ally drew up showing the abuses. Here nothing is spared, argument, sarcasm, ridicule. The

Secretary, Octavius Blewitt, seems to have been "the enemy."

In 1866 Boz indulged himself in some amusing *persiflage* of a French translation of his "Our Mutual Friend," in which he gave play to a good-natured rallying. It may be said that nothing in such attempts is more delectable than the version of Pickwick, which is as amusing in its way as the original.

As the energetic man pursued his mixed, tumultuous course, busy with innumerable things, conducting his paper, writing his serials, with Christmas numbers, proof-correcting, editing, with readings and travel combined, doing all his varied work in his own thorough fashion, he was, alas! destined to receive a staggering blow, which was to throw him into a state of confusion and hopeless wreck almost. This was an accident which befell his assistant, agent, factotum, editor, his "second mind" and keeper of his seals, his trusty and faithful W. H. Wills, who was thrown from his horse in 1868, and, lighting on his head, received concussion of the brain, which left him *hors de combat.* I have never forgotten his vivid description of his sensations: "Ah, you cannot divine what it is to hear *doors slamming in your head* all day." Poor Wills! For years he had to make tentative experiments as to reading, writing, or mental effort; but the fatal sounds always recurred, so he gave up the attempt.

This faithful lieutenant died in the year 1880 at his country "seat," as he might call it, down at Sherrards, near Welwyn in Hertfordshire. For long he had been alone, for his patron had gone home ten years before, and most of the staunch old contributors too were dead. In his later years he was consoled for his great calamity by his new order of life as a country gentleman, hospitable entertainer, and even Justice of the Peace. Ever friendly and good-natured, he exercised an unbounded hospitality.

Seven years before another crushing blow had fallen on Boz, when Arthur Smith, his right-hand man in business, brother to Albert, and one of the soundest, cleverest managers of exhibitions, fell ill of a sudden, was snatched away as suddenly, and left the unfortunate Dickens immersed in unknown businesses, mysteries and details which he could make nothing of!

No one can conceive the disastrous position in which Boz was thus suddenly placed by the loss of such a valuable assistant as Wills. He was bound up with numerous and heavy enterprises—readings, editing, publishing—each requiring careful and laborious superintendence, and here of a sudden the burden of all was thrown upon him. The finding of fresh, competent men might not have been so difficult, but the thing was to find persons suited to him and his ways—a peculiar type of assistant who would understand him as they had done. Well might he feel hopeless and helpless as he looked about him. But he showed his wonderful courage, and strove to mend matters as he could. Alas! the result showed him that he must do everything himself. Wills and his friends were buoyed up with the hope that careful rest would restore him. His chief looked forward to this, and, while waiting, was assisted by an old *aide* and co-operator Morley. But Morley had been appointed a professor, and could not stay long. Finally, however, it was found that Wills was making no advance, and Dickens had to ask himself what *was* to be done. In February, 1869, he determined on the not very prudent step of putting his eldest son, Charles the younger, in the place of this well-trained man.

I have often thought that when Boz was thinking how to supply Wills's place it was a pity he did not recall the name of the highly-capable and amiable James Payn, who might have suited him excellently. His later direction of the *Cornhill Magazine* certainly proved his capacity, though a drawback would have been his sufferings from the most acute forms of gout. This, however, did not assail him until some years later.

For his other and then more active department Boz, after much search and many difficulties, had selected George Dolby, a useful personage, but far inferior to his predecessor. He was, however, well adapted for dealing with the Americans, whom Dickens was now about to visit, for he was equipped with a store of rough-and-ready *badinage*, a loud laugh, and stock of would-be humorous stories. I could fancy Boz finding himself but ill suited with such a companion, unless he chose at times to *s'encanailler*, as the French have it, which would be a relief and recreation.

The untiring Editor, never sparing himself and giving of his best, in the early days of *All the Year Round* cast about for some *coup* which might add to the general attraction of his paper, and with his usual felicity devised something that was to prove effective. This was the series styled "The Uncommercial Traveller," or later "Uncommercial Samples." These at once attracted, and are indeed most entertaining to read, being full of vivacity, gaiety, and even high spirits. The mere collection of titles suggests hilarity. Boz, in his latter days of conductorship, saw that he could make his contributions more weighty and important by setting his name to them instead, as formerly, of "submerging" them among the other anonymous contributors. It was thus that he lighted on the notion of these "Uncommercial Samples," one of his happiest conceptions, though I fancy rather suggested by the success of Thackeray's "Roundabout Papers." It is amusing to contrast the respective treatment, each denoting the writer's character and tastes. Thackeray is wholly critical of *other* persons and things, and delivers his own depreciations of persons and things *ex cathedra.* Boz seems to wish to entertain. He describes certainly his own feelings and observations, but conveys that it is all done to amuse. Thackeray's was the loftier view, the sarcastic critic, quite "superior," and ever taking a sort of judicial attitude in his cynical carpings. Dickens went down and joined the crowd and talked with those near him, pointing out something that would amuse. Thackeray remained in his "reserved" seat, indulging his neighbours with sneers and sarcastic jests at everyone's expense, affecting to mourn over the general depravity and insincerity of his fellows.

It may be doubted if any author of note has furnished such vivacious and interesting series of personal details and reflections, as well as of light and airy adventures pleasantly told, as did Dickens in "The Uncommercial Traveller" (or "Samples"), and in other papers relating to himself, scattered through the two journals. From these we come to know the *man* in his most confiding and familiar mood, somewhat after the pattern of "Eugenius." He began with seventeen papers, then left them aside; later eleven were added, and later again eight more, making thirty-six in all, quite a body of interesting communings, which sets our favourite author completely before us, as though in *robe de chambre.* It may be said the incidents are trifling, but it is the garnishing, the setting, the Boz view of things that attracts, and there is a fresh and delightful humour present. These productions, as our author tells us, "were received with very great favour," which is no surprise, for the topics dealt with are truly suggestive, all betokening that he is reporting and illuminating also what he has felt and observed. And what feeling and what observation! It has since become the fashion for glibly inferior, boisterous writers to tell us all about themselves, what *they* have felt and observed, but with a difference—and such a difference!—such confessions being made with a free and almost intrusive familiarity which has become quite intolerable.*

Dickens was often to experience his little annoyances and embarrassments from incautious or unscrupulous contributors, though they were only "pin-pricks." He knew how to extricate himself with grace and charity, but they were worries. Thus in April, 1866, someone sent him a paper called "Our Suburban Residences," in which the natives of the place were touched off with much vivacity, with also a personality that ought to have put him on his guard. There was a paragraph of a few lines describing a German doctor, who was a homœopath, "professing to cure all maladies with invisible globules." He had wrought cures, "some of which, to say the least, were extraordinary." "He had set up a home for orphans, for which, supported by public subscriptions, he had constituted himself secretary, medical attendant, surgeon, superintendent, and all the offices of such an institution rolled into one." Now this seems what is called "running a little close to the wind," and Boz's treatment of the matter seems to indicate that some severe steps were about to be taken, for he compelled the writer to make an almost abject apology, introduced by a severe rebuke, a quite unusual thing with this indulgent man. It ran:

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* Here are some titles of these enjoyable papers: "His General Line of Business," "The Shipwreck," "Wapping Workhouse," "Two Views of a Cheap Theatre," "Poor Mercantile Jack," "Refreshments for Travellers," "Travelling Abroad," "The *Great Tasmania's* Cargo," "City of London Churches," "Shy Neighbourhoods," "Trumps," "Dullborough Town," "Night Walks," "Chambers," "Nurse's Stories," "Arcadian London," "The Italian Prisoner." There is also another series.

"PRIVATE CHARACTER.

"A representation has been made to us that the article entitled 'Our Suburban Residences' is not pure fiction, as it purported to be, and as we believed it to be, but has in it some colouring of distorted fact, calculated to misrepresent and injure an amiable and useful gentleman. We believe this representation to be strictly true, and we profoundly regret the publication of the article, though no editor can possibly guard himself at all times against such deception."

Another casual notice had merely stated that a certain writer lived at Hertford and had ruined himself in "devotion to wisdom." He was offended, and demanded reparation, and Boz thus made him his excuses:

"The author still lives, we find, at Hertford, and prosperously devotes himself to Eastern literature, of which we have ample proof in his 'elegant little catalogue.' We learn that not only profit but honour has sprung from his labours, and that he has received gold medals from the Queen and Empress of the French in appreciation of the skill and good taste which he has displayed in his art."

Thus gracefully does our author make the *amende.* We see here good feeling and the wish to make the complaining worthy satisfied with himself.

In September, 1864, there was nearly a serious catastrophe at the office of the journal, which seems to have been an attempt at setting the place on fire, it would appear, by one of the staff, for Dickens writes to Wills: "It is to be regretted that we could not take —— to Bow Street. In the case of so nefarious an offence there really is a duty to be done to Society, though I am almost afraid to use the phrase, it is so horribly abused." The truth was "the chief," from his generous, confiding nature and known feeling to the poor and lower class, was a sort of public mark or victim to be "spoiled" or frightened in case of faction and disappointment. The system in this extreme case proved to be successful, for the scoundrel, as we see, was "let off."

The amiable Dickens, who was so confiding and generous with his subordinates, often met with but an ill return, even from those he most trusted. Mr. Lehmann supplies a letter of a very disastrous incident, showing what occurred in 1867 during the Readings—in this case a well-trusted follower had been "stealing money." "No wonder," said Boz, "I was shocked, because often as I had tried him I never found him beside my desk when I was writing a letter *without finding him trying to read it.*"[*] He comforted Wills with this noble declaration: "If we try to do our duty to the people we employ, treating them kindly and fairly, their doing wrong cannot change our doing right, and that should be enough for us." And then this moral: "I am glad that the misconduct of —— has given us the opportunity of advancing people whose conduct has been good."

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[*] This little touch illustrates Dickens's delightful capacity of setting every incident—even a disagreeable one—in a dramatic light and form.

In the year 1866, when the journal had been issued for about six years, the amazingly industrious conductor was able to furnish this report of work done:—Sixteen volumes each of some five or six hundred double-column pages, at five shillings and sixpence each volume, and containing these novels and tales: "A Tale of Two Cities," "Hunted Down," "Great Expectations" (Dickens), "The Woman in White" "No Name," (Wilkie Collins), "A Strange Story" (Sir E. Bulwer Lytton), "A Dark Night's Work" (Mrs. Gaskell), "Very Hard Cash"—it became later "Hard Cash"—(Charles Reade), "Quite Alone" (G. A. Sala), "A Day's Tour," "A Rent in a Cloud" (Lever), "Half a Million of Money" (Amelia B. Edwards), "Black Sheep" (Edmund Yates), "Alla Bar" (Charles Collins), "Never Forgotten," and "The Second Mrs. Tillotson" (Percy Fitzgerald). Here was a substantial and handsome display in the way of serial fiction. There was also "The Uncommercial Traveller," by Dickens, eight Christmas numbers, mostly of his own writing or contriving, nearly all the frameworks and many of the tales. He supplies to us a comprehensive account of aim and purpose of the magazine as "a collection of miscellaneous articles interesting to the widest range of readers, consisting of Suggestive, Descriptive and Critical Dissertations on the most prominent topics, British and foreign, that form the social history of the past eight years." His business-like thoroughness is shown by the well-designed index to each volume—not a mere list of the articles, but a topical one of "matters" as the French say. This drudging labour was continued to the very end for four years more. Only those familiar with the course of the journal could give a notion of the intimate, never-flagging connection which he maintained with it week by week, vitalising it by plans, suggestions, new ideas, his own actual contributions, never ceasing revision of proofs; making an incredible amount of anxious toil and manual work.

Two years later his wakeful, watchful mind was still planning new methods for improving his enterprise. On November 28th, 1868, he announced that "the noontide volume of *All the Year Round* being now completed, I shall commence next week an entirely new series of *All the Year Round*." And when the period fixed came round and the series was complete, he greeted "his patrons"—if they might so be described—with a sort of programme, in which is revealed the true, practical reason for starting a fresh series, namely the reluctance of subscribers to encumber themselves with long-protracted sets.

The most serious change, however, is announced in a casual way at the end, viz. the suppression of the familiar and ever-welcome Christmas number. Characteristic was the feeling that prompted it, and one which I take to be associated with the sort of repugnance he had conceived for the labour and difficulties entailed in conceiving the design and working out. Another reason no doubt was that it did not pay him for the intellectual expenditure and waste. This will be seen in a moment. It may have brought him in a thousand or even fifteen hundred pounds yearly; but he considered that here was the design for a book, or the substantial portion of a book, quite spoiled, lost or gone to waste. As the profits of the latter were from sixteen to twenty thousand pounds, anything that would impair the chances of these huge returns was clearly improvident. He no doubt felt all along that his Christmas miscellany was dearly bought. I fancy, however, that he might have been less *difficile* in the preparation of the miscellany, and that his name alone, and possibly some slight framework prepared without much expenditure of trouble, would have sufficed to bring him in the same substantial return. But we must recall his sturdy principle of doing everything in the best possible way it could be done.

As I continue turning over the double-columned pages of the journal, volume after volume, continually attracted by some of the Editor's attractive devices, I find it becoming hopeless to take stock of his versatile devices. Space would altogether fail; and what is worse, the result would run counter to the intention. There would be left the impression of a catalogue, of repetition, and perhaps of tediousness. So I pause here, having given, as I think, just sufficient specimens to supply an idea of Boz's enticing system and methods.

There were ominous clouds overshadowing him which I noted with a melancholy interest during these closing days, when I could see that something was impending. He seemed borne down and worn out, yet struggling on. Never shall I forget the melancholy of my last talk with him, when he strove as usual to be cheerful and encouraging.

In one of the early numbers we have this almost fierce and vehement protest:—

"To the Public.

"A very unjustifiable paragraph has appeared in some newspapers, to the effect that I have relinquished the Editorship of this Publication. It is not only unjustifiable because it is wholly untrue, but because it must be wilfully or negligently untrue if any respect be due to the explicit terms of my repeatedly published announcement of the present new series under my own hand."

Here was a tone of passionate excitement usually exhibited by the writer when any charge that was unjust or unfounded was put forward against him. He repelled it with warmth and indignation. No doubt he felt that his long-established position and reputation—as all but the idol of his public—should protect him from such falsehoods.

The new series had been made more inviting by an artistic heading, the type was less crowded, and there was altogether a brighter air. And yet these constant changes and alterations somewhat suggest the notion that the Editor was feeling his hold of the public relaxing, and that it was necessary to find some new form of attraction. It might have been that this shape of personally conducted journal had now grown a little old fashioned. It had been nearly twenty years now before the public, which was a long time. The public has its little caprices. It was no doubt gradually preparing itself for the newer and more personal form of "weekly," the "Society Journal," which was to offer something more piquant, and supply the most familiar forms of household "gossip," combined with the short tale, essays and political speculation. Again, as already hinted, *All the Year Round* had never surmounted the disability of its rather awkward, uncongenial name, which was always interposing between its contents and the reader. It expressed little more than the method of its issue. Had its gifted Editor lived some years longer he was likely enough to have witnessed its slow decay.

CHAPTER XVII

EXTINCTION OF THE TWO JOURNALS

It is a rather sad thing to follow the waning fortunes of *All the Year Round* during the years that followed the founder's death. As is known, he not only left his son in the editor's chair, but bequeathed to him the whole property in the concern. This was indeed a most valuable legacy, equivalent, I fancy—it is a mere conjecture—to some two or three thousand pounds a year. A less sum would certainly not have remunerated Dickens for his labours. This to the son was wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, for he had strangely chosen the printer's calling, and was joined with his brother-in-law, Evans, in a printing venture of their own.* His first act was to purchase Gad's Hill, a scarcely provident step, at an enormous price, due to the prestige of the late owner—nearly £7,000. Then came the editing of his journal.

He set himself to his very ardous task, for which he was scarcely equipped. But he was clever—a "smart fellow" as his friends held him to be (and he had many warm friends), and by simply following the traditions of the journal, and retaining the old contributors, he really managed to keep his craft afloat almost to the end of his life—for many years.

He issued a modest appeal to the public asking its support and patronage, heading it oddly enough, it must be said; for everyone would recall what the word "Personal" was associated with some years before.

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* The pair became printers to the Crystal Palace, under the style of "Charles Dickens and Evans, Printers," and as a matter of course they undertook the printing of the journal.

PERSONAL.

It was my Father's wish, expressed in writing only a week before his death, that I, his eldest son, and latterly his assistant editor, should succeed him in the management of the Journal so long associated with his name.

In accordance with this clearly-expressed desire, and strong in the hope inspired by so encouraging a mark of his confidence, I address myself to the fulfilment of the task which he appointed me to discharge.

It is intended that the management of *All the Year Round*, in the future, shall be based on precisely the same principles as those on which it has, up to this time, been conducted. The same authors who have contributed to its columns in time past, will contribute to them still. The same spirit which has in the past pervaded its pages will, so far as conscientious endeavour may render it possible, pervade them still. The same earnest desire to advocate what is right and true, and to oppose what is false and unworthy, which was the guiding principle of my Father's career, and which has always characterised his management of *All the Year Round*, will, I most earnestly hope, continue to be apparent in its every word.

So much, then, being the same, it may not be presumptuous in me to hope that the same readers with whom this Journal, and that which preceded it, found favour for so many years, may still care to see the familiar title page on their tables as of old.

With this brief explanation of the course I propose to adopt, and omitting all reference whatever to my own personal feelings in connexion with the great sorrow which has rendered this statement necessary, I leave the future Journal to speak for itself.

"It is better that every kind of work, honestly undertaken and discharged, should speak for itself than be spoken for." These were the words with which my Father inaugurated the New Series of *All the Year Round.* I cannot surely do better than repeat them in this place.

CHARLES DICKENS, JUNR.

This appeared on July 2nd, and for some months he signed himself in this fashion.

The amiable Boz was often led away in his judgments by his partialities. He certainly made a mistake when he conceived that his son had something of his own turn for writing. It was the last thing he had a turn for. His style lacked imagination, and was conceived in a hard matter-of-fact strain as though he were writing a business letter. Boz used to write to his friends congratulating himself on having found so useful an auxiliary, who would by and by, when he had learned the *métier*, take up the whole duty.

This younger Charles* was rather a perplexing character—a good-natured, friendly fellow, as I always found him, business-like, also regular in payments, but I fancy with small control over his own expenses. He had many friends and acquaintances, and was always *bon camarade*, and though he had to struggle with many cares and a large family, he did so cheerfully. As I have said, he was not a trained writer, though he understood the newspaper fashions very well. He was the author of some cleverly-designed Guide Books for London and Paris, laid out on quite new lines, which I believe still hold their ground. He never lost his spirit and cheerfulness. For a long series of years, even down to his death, he contrived to baffle and surmount all difficulties.

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* I recall that amiable and brilliant man, the late Canon Ainger, telling me that he had been at a day school with Charles Dickens the younger, and the two Stones, Marcus and his brother. The master was Dr. King, and the school somewhere near the Regent's Park. The lads would come home together to Dickens's house, and often amused their host by "taking off" the oddities of their master. The observant Boz took stock of these free and easy sketches, and having to draw a schoolmaster in his *Dombey and Son*, he "put in" this Dr. King as "Blimber." Dr. King had two sisters, also a subject for the lads' comic powers, but Boz contented himself merely with one female pedagogue. We may be certain that our author found this method of *adapting* living characters a great saving of time and trouble, besides its imparting an air of nature and reality.

Wonderful also was his steadiness of purpose, and the cleverness with which, to the last, he contrived to carry on his journal, for about twenty-three years, apparently without debt or embarrassment, and editing it also respectably. It was not unentertaining, even in its moribund days. But presently there was found no room for it. It had outlived its method.

"O my coevals, remnants of yourselves!"

So it was. "It vos to be and it vos, Samivel." A quaint attempt at keeping it alive was the revival of the old *Household Words* as a cheap and rather "scrubby" penny rival to the *Family Herald*, *London Journal*, and papers of that type. Finally, on its extinction, it was incorporated with *Household Words*. Both expired together about fourteen years ago. Later, in 1896, Charles Dickens the younger died, ending his chequered life. The two journals founded by Dickens had thus a course of about forty years, of which twenty were spent under his guidance. They provide good material in a library, making about forty volumes of really entertaining reading. One cannot but admire the variety of the topics that has been supplied; but as one turns from volume to volume one will have to think of the amazing, never-flagging weekly toil which secured this vein of interest, beyond doubt at the expense of health and strength, and even life itself.

L'Envoi.

And now, on coming to the close of this long retrospect, it will be asked, naturally enough, what influence had Dickens's long, laborious weekly teaching, continued unflaggingly for twenty years, on the style and methods of writing of the day? There can be no question but that he introduced and made fashionable an entirely novel system, developed out of the humorous treatment of his own novels. Everything was to be set in a comical light—the person or thing or situation, however grave or serious, must be made funny, *coûte que coûte.* This the vulgar might call caricature. Dickens's own humour, as shown in his lively papers, was limpid ever, clear, and mirth-moving. Not so that of his imitating followers,* whose "Dickens and water," as it was drolly described, was all mechanical.

There can be no doubt that the twenty years of unreal writing had resulted in an artificial sort of literature—an inferior, "*Dickensese dialect*" as it was called. Words were the counters with which the game was played, and which took the place of thought and feeling. The system was carried so far, that on reading it now we wonder how it could have been accepted even for a time. But on the death of Boz a reaction set in. It was seen that he alone had the secret, and so with his departure the whole system was lost, and utterly vanished. Yet all was utterly unlike the *real* Dickens. The classical mind could only recall the phrase "*corruptio optimi pessima.*"

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* In one of his letters to Wills (*penes* Lehmann) Boz quotes from a letter of mine to himself, where I frankly spoke of this "slavish" copying of him, as though it were unavoidable.

Finally, we may ask ourselves what influence this laborious weekly discipline exercised on *his* genius and methods. That is a large, important and most interesting—hitherto utterly neglected—subject. Did this system of weekly observation—this looking, as it were, through a humorous opera-glass at the oddities, humours, follies, "goodities" of human nature—improve or dilute away his great spirit of humour? Did it enfeeble the bold and broad treatment which was usually found in his novels? And yet it was impossible but that a thousand or so weeks of this journalistic work *must* have had its effect on his more monumental efforts. I think on the whole it may have been favourable; for having no responsibility to anyone, he could give free play to all his unbounded fancies and humours, make experiments of a fanciful kind where there was no harm done in case of failure, and make good and valuable practise in shooting follies as they flew. This gave his hand a greater flexibility and buoyancy. But then came the drawback in a *habit* of ephemeral treatment, with a consequent loss of sustained effort; in looking forward "a long way ahead," and preparing his "spring" deliberately—in short, the twenty years of fitful, casual sketch-writing must have impaired his old gift of carrying on a story in long, prepared portions and through a long space of time. These are interesting speculations, which indeed might be considered disposed of by the evidence of his last story, unfinished as it is.

IV

ACCOUNT OF THE LEADING CONTRIBUTORS TO THE TWO JOURNALS,

BASED ON THE AUTHOR'S REMINISCENCES

Leading Contributors to the two Journals

CHAPTER XVIII

G. A. SALA AND WILKIE COLLINS

The interest in the review which follows of a number of clever and distinguished writers who worked with Dickens lies, I think, in the fact that it is not gathered from the *Dictionary of National Biography* and such books of reference, but that they were personal acquaintances and friends of my own, and that with many I was on familiar terms. At this moment it is curious that there should be nobody but myself in such a position; that is to say, who knew such a group as Charles Reade, the first Lord Lytton, Sala, Yates, Mrs. Lynn Linton, Mrs. Norton, Mark Lemon, Wilkie Collins, Barry Cornwall, Forster, Browning and many more. There is now no one else who knew such a group—or the ordinary daily life they lived and their association with Boz.

The two periodicals, *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*—apart from their connection with Dickens and the genial inspiration which he furnished—may be considered interesting as supplying an almost complete view of the more important "Victorian" writers, "followers" of Boz, and in some cases all but servile imitators of his style. They became, indeed, a sort of school where they were taught—or taught themselves—a special style.

Dickens, indeed, practically trained up quite a new school of writers—insensibly moulding them to his own peculiar pattern and style. They were only too eager and apt at imitation. They were even clever enough to pick up a sort of mock Dickensese dialect, a kind of forced smartness with a sustained design of being funny and of making everything funny. It became really a perfect knack, and quite easy to acquire. When describing some personage one descriptive device was to liken him to some grotesque being—familiar, say, in politics—or give him a nickname and throughout never to call him by any other. I am afraid I was a dreadful offender in this way. Thus I recall dubbing a harmless French General—Goyon by name—who was in command at Rome, "*Grand Pan Jam*,"* and he was so called with many ridiculous variations to the end, much to the bewilderment of the readers. It was thought extremely droll! To read these lucubrations nowadays leaves a strange effect of sad unreality and emptiness, as of exercises in familiar words merely.

Where nowadays can we look for so versatile, brilliant, many-sided and also exuberant writer as George Augustus Sala? How gifted he was, how accomplished, how full of "dash" and "go" and promptness! but alas! how unstable and uncertain. This extraordinary being could talk in many languages, could write upon any subject, upon a broomstick even, could travel in remote regions, could "word-paint" to perfection. He was "special correspondent," special reporter of scenes and events, filling his report with vivid strokes and "purple patches," as no other could. He was at home everywhere: in France, Germany, Russia; a novelist, a dramatist after a sort, essayist, talker, what not. But he was wrecked, as I have said, by his reckless habits, his devotion to the pleasure of the moment, his laxness in money matters, and his too convivial habits.

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* I recall receiving some fifty years later from the learned Editor of the great *English Dictionary*, Sir J. A. H. Murray, a letter inquiring for an exact reference to the place where I had used these words. Naturally I could not tell, and was much pressed to exert myself, as the matter was of importance; for, strange as it may seem, there was no other precedent to be found! It never could be found, and now figures in its place without reference, save as to the name of the writer.

The story of his first connection with Boz has been often told; how his short sketch, "The Key of the Street," pleased the Editor, and led to many contributions. It took him a long time, however, before he could bring round the indulgent Boz to agree to his darling scheme that he should be dispatched to Russia to do for the journal what he had so often done for his own paper, *The Daily Telegraph*, that is, "word-paint" all the manners, customs and doings of the Muscovites. The scheme promised well, and might have been a clever *coup* had it been faithfully carried out. As it was it turned out a disastrous venture. He had the most extraordinary art of saying an infinite deal about nothing, all the while seeming to be writing down facts and incidents. But he had also the fatal defect of growing *tired* of an enforced "job." Then would he ramble off in semi-humorous disquisitions, recollections, anecdotes, sarcasms, anything but the matter in hand, and, of course, he "got no forrader." He was much directed by humours and impulses, and would of a sudden find his task repulsive, and therefore to be abandoned.

He was dispatched on this expedition towards the end of 1856, well equipped with advances of money and suitable directions, and on October 4th his reports began to appear under the title of "A Journey Due North." For a few numbers all promised well, though there was much of Sala and but little of Russia, but presently came a sort of breakdown and suspension of interest. When he got at last to St. Petersburg he was almost tired of the thing. He found it too hard to go about and pick up information, and preferred to indulge in his rambling speculations all about nothing. For instance, he devoted column after column to the subject of the Russian cab-drivers, which then led him on to the cab-drivers of other countries. He seemed unable to get away from the subject. Then there was the great street, the Newski Prospect, which he could not quit either, over which he maundered for weeks. He had, perhaps, spent all the money paid in advance. He was already sick of the whole business. The journal was greatly injured by these vagaries; it was a very expensive trip, and Dickens, after showing great patience, abruptly stopped the series.*

I knew him very well, and both liked and admired him. He used to write to me amusing letters in a confidential strain and penned in that exquisite and most careful handwriting which seemed so inconsistent in one of his careless habits. "Come up and hear my new cough," he would write humorously. I have preserved some of these, and fancy that a specimen will entertain the reader :—

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* When Thackeray started the *Cornhill*, Sala, who knew something about Hogarth, began an ambitious life of the painter, which started with promise, but presently subsided into the usual ramblings about himself and the present day and everybody, with much affectionate patting on the back of the painter, "dear honest George with his good brave heart," etc. It speedily, and abruptly, stopped short, never to be resumed.

49 GOWER STREET,
BEDFORD SQUARE, W.C.,
Monday Night, Twentieth September, 1875.

DEAR PERCY FITZGERALD,

You were to have come to see me, at my late residence at Brompton, a long time ago, to see if my vols. of the old *Examiner* (1809–1840) contained anything valuable to you from a Brightonian point of view; but you were then going out of town, and it strikes me that I also, since you wrote, have been "out of town," even among the orange groves of Granada and the flower-farms of Morocco. But I am *not* going to India.

Dr. Tomson's MSS. Well, all I know about them is that you will find mention of their being in the Ashmolean Museum in Howard Staunton's (Routledge's) *Shakespeare: Critical Remarks on "Macbeth."* There are extracts, likewise (I think) from a certain stupendous piece of hack work compiled by anonymous martyrs at £2 a week for the advantage of literary men, and the profit of Messrs. ——, London and Edinburgh—the Moses & Son of letters. Nay, they must yield the palm to ——, ——, & ——. The ——, sweaters as they have been, were unable to conceive the grand imposture of making *one* grubby stereotyped cast of a wood-engraved block do duty in half a score of English publications. Hundreds of wretches have held up their hands at the Old Bailey Sessions who have not been guilty of a tithe of these low, cogging frauds, etc., who have unscrupulously—— Dear me, I must have been dozing over this letter, and dreamed that I was Charles Reade pitching into all and sundry in the *Pall Mall.*

I like Irving setting up for a Shakspearian critic, and not knowing that Davenant in 1679 had been 11 years dead. Still Irving, like Mr. Eccles in *Caste*, is a "very clever man," and I hope *Macbeth* will be a success.

I wish that you would name an evening *next week* when you would come and smoke a cigar with me. You have only to name an evening when you are disengaged after 8, and I will make it mine. Meanwhile I am always faithfully yours,

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

In the "office ledger" we find at almost every entry in reference to Sala the words "paid in advance," suggesting a doubt whether the goods were supplied. The elder Dumas was much addicted to this system, though he sometimes went "one better," sending a well-sealed roll of paper instead of copy.

Sala at length indulged in an escapade which tried to breaking-point the endurance of Boz, who then cast him off altogether. It came about in this way. After a series of failures to perform contracts, advances of cash never repaid, many "leavings in the lurch," the reckless being began to importune his friend to "give him one more chance." Had he not a splendid stirring novel, all but ready, full of adventure? Either wearied out or in a fit of good nature, Dickens gave way. It was about half done, I believe, but this was much—enormous even—for Sala. It promised well, and was called "Quite Alone!"

It went on its course for a good many months, beginning in February, 1864, and reached as far as September 10th. In the next number, however, we were greeted with this notice:—

"'QUITE ALONE.'

"The continuation of this serial story is postponed unavoidably until this day fortnight."

We who knew our Sala could easily read between the lines—no "copy" and no power to write copy—disgust—promises. A week would not do; but in a fortnight he positively would be on the road again. But when a week had passed it was found there was no prospect. It may be that he could not be found. However, this announcement had to be made :—

"'QUITE ALONE.'

"This story will be resumed in the number for October 8th."

That is in the next week.

Next week, however, instead of the story we had another notice :—

"'QUITE ALONE.'

"The continuation of this story is postponed until next week."

We can fancy the worry and annoyance for the Editor. However, the story was actually resumed. and to date. On November 12th it was concluded, Had the unhappy Sala, then, therefore redeemed his promise? Nothing of the kind. I believe he supplied not another line, and it is certain that Boz was compelled to call in the aid of a deft emergency man—Andrew Halliday—who in an incredibly short time contrived to finish off the tale, imitating the style and peculiarities of his friend—for such he was—with due success. A curious episode altogether.

We next turn to a character that contrasts strangely with this erratic being, as sober, restrained, and business-like as the other was the reverse.

William Wilkie Collins, to give his correct name was perhaps of all his followers the most useful and valuable to Dickens—more useful a good deal than those greater "star performers," Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, Charles Reade, and others of such rank. He was gifted with the painstaking art of working out any fancy that he devised, and getting out of it all that it was worth. He had, moreover, much ingenuity and craft, and could devise an eleborate plot or story, though of a mechanical sort. He really had no genius and but little inspiration or romance.*

He began modestly enough, and I remember a trifling little hand-book of his, "Rambles among Railways," which was somewhat of what is called the "Potboiler" sort. But his early novel, "Basil," always seemed to have more power and dramatic spirit than anything that came later. It was coarse enough, but had a certain fire and Zolaesque power, turning on a wild and hasty marriage made by a man who had become infatuated by a woman whom he had met in an omnibus.

Wilkie made his *début* in the journal with a very sensational little story called "The Terribly Strange Bedstead." A man found himself fastened down in his bed, and noted the roof gradually descending on him with the purpose of pressing him slowly to death. The horrors of such a situation were very graphically portrayed, and I well recollect going to hear him, from mere curiosity, recite his "Terribly Strange Bedstead" at the old Olympic Theatre. I arrived at the door just as a very stout, elderly gentleman, *qui fait du ventre*, was getting out of a cab. He came on in due course, but a most singularly inefficient performance it was. He had little or no voice, and scarcely attempted to raise it. He seemed to think that the word "*bed*stead" was full of tragic meaning, and we heard again this "*bedstead*" repeated till it became almost comic. It seemed like an elderly gentleman at his club "boring" his neighbour with a long story of something "he had seen in the papers." He was destitute of every qualification for his task. I remember reporting the scene to my friend Forster, who was amused and laughed his rhinoceros laugh. As might be anticipated, the enterprise was not a success. But all the same, people went to see him.

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* He and his brother Charles were named by their father in quaint fashion after two painters, Alston and Wilkie. Boz himself favoured this system, calling his sons after literary personages, thus: Henry Fielding Dickens, Alfred Tennyson Dickens, etc.

In the first week in January, 1857, he made a serious step in his career, and came forth with a long story—the "Dead Secret"—an interesting, cleverly-written thing, simply told and without the elaborateness of his longer later works. When Dickens, a few years later, was starting his new venture, *All the Year Round*, he boldly determined to commission a serial by Wilkie Collins. And the well-known, most successful "Woman in White" was introduced to the town under the most favourable conditions. The first chapter appeared on November 26th, 1859.

I well remember how this elaborate work, which really made his reputation, was talked about, and what interest it excited, among ladies particularly. The author was a scrupulous, painstaking person, and laboured hard each week to produce his effects. How excellent too was the name! True, the critics laughed at the solemn tricks—the insistence on the perpetual "Statements" of Hartright and others, and the long-worded extracts from "the Housekeeper's Diary." Everybody in this strange book seemed to be keeping diaries and making statements, or writing papers of some sort. But "it served." He was particularly proud of his Count Fosco, who was a mere "twopence coloured" figure, talking a strange *lingo* devised by the author, unlike anything known abroad. However, as I say, "it served." It was followed by other works, equally elaborate. "No Name," "The Moonstone," etc., were mostly replicas of the first, and did not attract nearly so much.

As Wilkie Collins grew older he waxed fat and portly, and became a large-headed, benevolent-looking sort of being. But he was too much of the *bon-vivant*, and paid in bodily infirmities accordingly. What agonies of gout he suffered! This enemy seized on his eyes, and the pains were excruciating. I once met Charles Kent just come from visiting him. "His eyes," he said, "were literally *enormous bags of blood!*" When Miss Hogarth and her niece were collecting Dickens's letters for publication, Collins was disinclined to lend his, as he thought them of sufficient interest to be published separately. They were issued in America after his death; but I was struck with their formality, which suggests that there was never a substantial bond of friendship between the two. I have my own theory—that Wilkie came at last to think he was a very great writer, almost on a level with his chief. However, this may be doing him an injustice, but it is not at all unlikely. It was hard to relish their collaboration in the Christmas Numbers and "The Lazy Tour," where the contrast of styles became really an injury to Dickens, Collins's being so forced and pretentious, while Boz had to fit himself as best he could to his friend's transpontine manner. The meaning of it all was, I think, that the wearied Dickens was glad to find someone of good reputation who could take some of the heavy work off his hands and so relieve him. But there can be no doubt that the combination was most injurious.

Dickens, ever good natured, did not see how damaging was this intimate co-operation, how uninteresting a spectacle it was to the reader. We would have some columns of Boz's light-hearted sketches of roadside travel succeeded abruptly by some of his partner's gloomy stories in the usual ponderous, self-important manner. This "Lazy Tour" seemed to be pieced together in a clumsy fashion, the slices of material being alternated. It is not difficult to see that Collins was allowed to regulate matters, owing to his own and Dickens's faith in his "powers of construction."

Wilkie's humour was of a rather laboured kind, and contrasted oddly with Boz's gaiety. The latter, however, fully believed in his companion and heartily admired him. But "Wilkie" had a sort of priggish solemnity that often brought a smile. Collins fancied that he was "a great Frenchman," and knew the foreigner's mind thoroughly. Hence that corrupt jargon of Fosco's broken talk which was evolved out of his imagination, and never heard in real life. Dickens could not help imitating his devices, as in the case of Blandois.

I alway think that Dickens's noble, unselfish, generous nature expended itself somewhat vainly on such a character, certainly not endowed with anything likely to respond to such affection. Not that I knew him sufficiently to judge him, but he had not the warm and rather romantic tone of feeling that Boz looked for; and I fancy one can detect in the latter's closing letters a somewhat colder and more business vein. We may note, too, how Collins seemed to encroach, as it were, and offer direction instead of accepting it.

Their expedition described in "The Lazy Tour" was to Cumberland and its fells, and in the course of it the ordinary accident of a sprained foot befell Collins, the horrors of which were worked up and magnified in a rather ludicrous way. They stayed at a little country inn, and it shows the unvarying, never-failing influence of Boz that his sparkling sketch of it should have been reprinted in the place for the benefit of tourists. On the whole, it cannot be said that "The Lazy Tour" was a success, or that it added to Boz's reputation, owing, as I said, to the fact that there was "too much Collins" in it.

Later it was sad to see how Collins's popularity fell off. His own special style, that of "The Woman in White," was quite exhausted, and he was issuing feeble replicas which brought him, I suspect, but little. He took to the stage; but his pieces were all too "talky," and showed little *dramatic* feeling. Such was "Man and Wife." How well I remember a night at the old Adelphi when his "Black and White" was produced, and when the whole Dickens family, full of affectionate partisanship, attended. I see them in the lower omnibus-box, close to the stage, applauding—trying to believe that it was a success—Boz's eyeglasses glistening in the light. I went round to them between acts. It was a fair piece, but not a success. Another of his efforts was an original and striking one, "The New Magdalen," given at the Olympic, somewhat restoring the fortunes of that house, which that interesting actress, Miss Ada Cavendish, was then directing. It was preceded by a short piece of my own.

Alas! in due time Dickens's eyes opened to the true nature and gifts of his friend. "I quite agree with you," he wrote, in the year before his death, "about 'The Moonstone.' The construction is wearisome beyond endurance, and there is a vein of obstinate conceit in it that makes enemies of readers."*

Dickens's son-in-law, Charles Alston Collins, eagerly wished to follow in his brother's footsteps and to be taken seriously as a literary man. He of course, received due encouragement. His was a most amiable and even engaging temperament, but sorely tried by a terrible disease, which he bore with wonderful patience. He was, in fact, a permanent invalid, yet he went through his daily course of life with infinite courage. Forster gives praise to his contributions, which had a quiet, placid humour. There was "The Eye Witness," a series of quaint, half sarcastic pictures of things, manners and whims, amusing enough. Some of his little odd ideas entertained his family, such as his recipe for curing sea-sickness, which he would gravely expound as infallible if properly and conscientiously carried out. His explanation of this grotesque remedy always caused unbounded but good-natured enjoyment. A book of real merit, were its redundancies carefully shorn away, was the account of his wedding trip through France in a light chaise, entitled "A Cruise upon Wheels," which is truly entertaining and full of gentle humour. It offers much shrewd observation and many humorous pictures. But I could see that a literary work was, with him, a painful thing to engender. His *magnum opus* was a novel which his father-in-law good naturedly admitted to the magazine, a most risky matter, as the amiable author had small gifts in that way. I recall Boz, with an air of mystery, one day inviting me into a room at his office, " as he wished to have my opinion on an important matter." We entered, and I saw before me on the floor one of the great orange placards of the paper, some four or five feet long, and exhibiting in great red and glossy black type " Brought to the Bar." This was " Charley's new story, and now, what do you say of the title ? " An embarrassing question, as most people will see it is not attractive, though there is a sort of *double entendre.* I see the two faces fixed on me anxiously, for I was to represent, as it were, the public, literally the " man in the street," who was eventually to read the placard. I forget how I extricated myself. Poor suffering fellow ! He was not long after released from his trials.

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* In some marginalia on Forster's *Life* Collins speaks rather coldly, and perhaps with too much severity, of his great friend.

CHAPTER XIX

BOZ'S LADY CONTRIBUTORS: MRS. GASKELL, MISS MARTINEAU, MRS. LYNN LINTON, GERALDINE JEWSBURY

Boz, who has supplied us with such delightful scenes of comedy, was destined to experience in his own person many a humorous incident, which, even if inconvenient, he must have relished. Such were his dealings with those eminent literary ladies—Mrs. Gaskell, Miss Martineau and Mrs. Lynn Linton. These writers were aggressive and short tempered. I have mentioned before his asking me for the sheets of my "Life of Garrick," which he wished to read on his voyage, and that they were struck off for him. When he came to the episode of the great actor's disputes with his three nagging actresses, he must have thought of the parallel in his own case, and of *his* three nagging ladies.

Mrs. Gaskell's finished style and quiet, playful strain of comedy, her tranquil, humorous treatment of country life, marked her out as the writer that approached most nearly—at least as nearly as could be hoped for—to the gifted Jane Austen. Such an auxiliary was of immense value at starting, but, as will be noted presently, her assistance had its drawbacks.

This accomplished writer has scarcely had sufficient justice done to her powers. Boz felt and admired the beautiful finish and delicacy of her work, though her style was totally different from his own. It is impossible even to think nowadays of a writer putting forth such delicately wrought pieces. Few would be capable enough to produce such works, and their reception might be as of the unintelligible.

On January 31st, 1850, he wrote in a flattering strain inviting her to join him. There was no living English writer he honestly said, whom he would prefer to enlist in his corps rather than the authoress of "Mary Barton," "a book that most profoundly affected and impressed me." If desired, he could go specially to Manchester to see her. Here were compliments indeed.

The lady was attractive both in face and person, had charming manners, with a general sweetness which gained on everybody. The Editor might therefore count on the most agreeable relations with his valuable recruit. She was to prove, unluckily, a deception in this respect. She showed that she had the fullest confidence in her own powers, haughtily dealt with him as equal to equal, and would not "stand any nonsense" where she fancied her rights were concerned. In spite of soothing compliments and abundant homage, she was to be the cause of much worry and trouble to him, and excellent as her performances were, it may be doubted whether her assistance was much gain to the paper. However, she responded in cordial terms, and it was settled that she was to set out in the very first number with a short serial entitled "Lizzie Leigh."

There is something quite comical in the awkward surprise and trouble which must have filled the genial Editor's soul when it first broke upon him that he had, as it were, "caught a Tartar." It seemed that the lady had conceived that she was rather condescending to the *great* writer in lending her aid. Troubles speedily began. All Boz's courteous compliments were thrown away. She stood upon her rights, and would not bate one of them. There were anxious councils in Wellington Street, as Wills reported new and haughty demands and protests on the part of the lady.

She particularly resented "any meddling with her work," and would coldly request or rather direct that the proofs should be left as she wrote them, that is unaltered, an unusual and unreasonable thing, as the conductor must always see to the interest of his paper. The amiable Boz was not accustomed to this *de haut en bas* style, for the usual tone of contributors was one of profuse gratitude to this great man for condescending to amend.

In December, 1851, he had made an alteration in her paper, changing some compliment to himself into an allusion to some other writer. For with his name, as he said, on every page of a journal there would be an impropriety in so mentioning himself. The lady at once recalled her paper; but it was then too late, for, as he said, "it had departed from him," *i.e.* had gone to press. "I would do anything," he wrote, "rather than cause you a minute's vexation arising out of what has given me so much pleasure, and I sincerely beseech you to think better of it, and not to fancy that any shade has been thrown on your charming writing by the unfortunate but innocent C.D." And he took an early opportunity of soothing her by praising another paper of hers.

"If you were not the most suspicious of women, always looking for soft sawder in the purest metal of praise, I should call your paper delightful and couched in the tenderest and most delicate manner. But being what you are, I have called it 'A Love Affair at Cranford,' and sent it to the printer."

Presently she wrote to Wills declaring she must particularly stipulate not to have her proofs touched *even by Mr. Dickens.* "That immortal creature," he said humorously, "had gone over her proofs with great pains—had, of course, taken out her *stiflings, hard plungings, lungings, and other convulsions,* and had also taken out *her weakenings and damagings of her own efforts.* 'Very well,' said the gifted man, 'she shall have her own way. But, after it 's published, show her this proof, and ask her to consider whether her story would have been the better or the worse for it.' "

In January, 1855, when she had wound up her story, and they were parting company, he congratulated her on her power and successes. He hoped, however, that the little "dissatisfaction with yourself (and me ?) which beset you for a minute or two once on a time fails to associate anything disagreeable with *Household Words.*" She had received her honorarium, per Wills, and C.D. evidently had a faint suspicion that this was not acceptable. It is clear she did not write to thank *him.* So he rather bluntly reminds her: "I trust you found it satisfactory." These financial duties, he explains, he had always left to Wills. Then he winds up with this little pin-prick: "I refer to it not as a matter of form, but because I sincerely wish everything *between us to be beyond the possibility of misunderstanding or reservation.*" Strange words, but obviously a sly reference to what he might have called her waywardness. But the whole makes an amusing little drama, full of strokes of character in two persons of genius. By and by the asperities were all smoothed away.

Boz long rued the day when he secured the services of that eminent free-thinking lady, Harriet Martineau, who was so totally impracticable, and independent of everyone. At first all went well, she giving vivid accounts of factory life, etc., of which she was a skilled observer. She wrote a goodly number of these things. But presently were to arise difficulties. It is odd that Boz should have admitted to a family journal a writer whose orthodoxy was suspect, and whose "free thought" was likely to leaven her writings. But here came a surprise. She offered "The Missionary," a story of Roman Catholic interest in which the hero was a Jesuit. Then a curious discussion arose. Both Editor and Sub-editor "mourned" the impossibility of publishing it: Wills, as she suggested with a sneer, because the public would say that Dickens was turning Roman Catholic, and Wills and Dickens because they never would publish anything controversial—a reasonable excuse. The matter never was accommodated. Presently Wills proposed that she should write some papers on the employment of women, but she explained rather pertly that her views would seem inconsistent with those which Dickens had previously expressed, also with his general idea that a woman was not to work, but to look pretty. A more serious incident occurred in the autumn. Asked for a work of fiction for the Christmas Number, this strange and unsatisfactory lady answered that "she despised herself as a writer of fiction."

She found fresh cause of quarrel in Dickens's treatment of the Lancashire mill-owners, and their behaviour to their "hands." In a pamphlet she fell foul of her late friend and editor, and used very scurrilous language concerning him and his utterances. She spoke of his "*ignorance, arrogance and cant,*" as exhibited in papers by himself and "his partner in his disgrace"—Wills—and charged him personally with "conceit, insolence and wilful one-sidedness." This vituperation seems almost incredible when addressed to such a man, and one who had been so indulgent to her fancies. His answer was a temperate refutation of her statement, and this amicable excuse for her outburst: "We have a respect for Miss Martineau . . . which nothing she can now say or do will destroy"—and he further claimed the respect of his readers "as a thing not to be forfeited for a few hasty words." He good-humouredly heads his protest, "Our Wicked Mis-statements."

"They never would publish *anything*," she went on, "*fact or fiction, which gave a favourable view of anyone* under the influence of the Roman Catholic faith." He would print "not a word in favour of Romanism." She declared she would have nothing more to do with *Household Words*. Boz hoped "that she would think better of it," and so they parted.

The amazing thing was to find the Miss Martineau of free thought, together with "Mr. Atkinson," her adopted comrade, not merely displeased with this anti-Romanist intolerance, but converted into a red-hot champion and defender of that faith. In spite of her falling-out with Wills, in a year or two he wrote to beg for one of her stories. She declined, because of a fresh affront to her new principles which had occurred in the interval. Collins had written a tale called "The Yellow Mask," in which there was "a wicked priest." She would not write for them, "no, not if I were to live twenty years." Enclosing an American cutting, she says: "H.W. is anti-Catholic on the sly. If the English people only knew of this bigotry his publication would be ruined. She would as soon write for *The*

Record." She likens them to a Grand Inquisitor. *He* does not profess Protestant principles while all the time pursuing the practices of Jesuitism. Wills said he saw they could never agree, and so the connection finally ended.

Here was a strange delusion, for such it certainly was. The notion that Dickens made such intolerant announcements was both absurd and untrue. It is enough to say that Stanfield the painter, a Catholic, was one of his dearest, most cherished friends, that I also was his friend, and so was Charles Kent. I may give my testimony that he was infinitely pleased with and used my account of a Jesuit School ("School Days at Saxonhurst," seventh edition), and that he dispatched me on a sort of Special Commission to Rome, giving me a perfectly free hand to set down what I liked that was favourable, and I used his permission liberally. At the same time, I admit there were now and then anti-Catholic sketches which pained.

Another of his female writers was that clever lady Mrs. Lynn Linton—a little eccentric in her appearance which might have served for Mrs. Jellaby in "Bleak House," though as we know this character was intended for Miss Martineau. When I produced a *Life of Garrick*, Dickens of his own good nature said that it should be reviewed in his magazine, and that it might be done well and sufficiently put it into Mrs. Linton's hands, and very well done it was. These kindly "lifts" were like his own kindly self. It would be difficult to do full justice to the varied gifts of this remarkable person, all but forgotten now. A correspondent in Paris for an English paper when only two-and-twenty, her father gave her just a year's allowance, and she went forth to seek her fortune as a literary woman. She began at once to write stories. Her work, "Joshua Davidson," a sort of free-thought story, had an enormous success. "Patricia Kemball," "Under which Lord ?" are names that come back to us as familiar. But she is best known by her "spicy" papers written for the *Saturday Review*, "The Girl of the Period," etc. To *All the Year Round* she was accustomed to contribute carefully-done analyses on books, and essays of a thoughtful kind. There was yet another connection between the conductor and this contributor, Gad's Hill, the house he so fondly loved, having been originally in the possession of the Lynn family.

With such a personality there was likely to be a little friction, and it speedily came. She had been given a work of Forster's to review, and could not resist inserting a few rather malicious touches. Boz saw that the lady wished to use her opportunity for the purpose of gratifying a little spleen. But how loyal he was ! The typical editor would have simply written back, "You must fit in some compliments to Forster and his book. He will expect it." But Dickens was hurt that anyone should have thought of using his paper to wound a friend. The lady having a reputation, he did not presume to alter it.

Here was his rebuke—

"Although your article on our old friend is so interesting as a piece of personal remembrance, it does not satisfy my desires as a Review of Forster's book. It could hardly be otherwise than painful to Forster that one of his old literary friends, and certainly of all others his most intimate and confidential, should insert in these pages our account of Landor—or touch the subject—without a word of commendation of a biography which has cost to my knowledge a world of care and trouble. I find from your letters to my son that you do not think well of the said book. Admitting that the *Life* was to be written at all, I *do*, and it is because I think well of it, that I am staggered and stopped short by your paper, and fear that I must turn to and write one in its stead."

There was yet another more interesting lady contributor, whom we find to our surprise the great Editor was eager to enclose in his net. This was a gifted writer as she seemed to him, for he lavishes great praises on her. She was, in fact, Geraldine Jewsbury, better known by her odd connection with the Carlyles. She was about forty when Dickens approached her, and had written a few novels. He wrote in the most flattering terms, saying he was a reader of hers and set great store by her and valued her highly, with other compliments, and in fact pressed her to assist him. This "tatter of a creature"—Carlyle's rough description—does not seem to have furnished any substantial help, for in her letters, in which she usually pours forth everything about herself, there are no allusions to this application. I fancy that as she was in the height of her eccentricity, Boz did not find it convenient to enter into any arrangement with the lady.

Still, this odd but gifted woman was eager to figure in magazines, and to get her papers accepted. Strange, therefore, is it to find her neglecting his very inviting and flattering offers. This she did in a curious, rather mysterious fashion, perhaps suited to her odd character. She told him that she had something that might suit—a short tale—which Mrs. Carlyle had in keeping, and was to send on to him. "Anyhow, let him see it, and the devil fly away with it for me!" Mrs. Carlyle, however, found objections to the story, it would seem, as regards the proprieties, a failing which did not suit the new journal. So she writes impetuously, bade her burn it, and tell Dickens that she did so by direction. Further, that he must not expect anything from her, giving the odd reason, at least as I interpret it, that she could not write with effect save in a style that would not suit *Household Words.* Strange creature, indeed! And yet not without interest, certainly clever, and at times brilliant.

Who now thinks of a writer named Julia Kavanagh? I well recall when it was correct to send to the libraries for her last novel, whose merits were discussed at dinner parties. She worked more profitably for the publishers with such things as *English Women of Letters, French Women of Letters, Women of* This and That, *Forget-me-nots.* She was considered a very "respectable" writer.

At that time Mrs. Norton and her wrongs filled a large space in the public eye. What a clever woman, and what a strikingly handsome one! I was struck with her likeness to the noble classical head of Grisi as Norma. I knew her very well. Once she read a story of mine through, which I took as a great compliment, even if she had merely *affected* to get through it. There was an odd link between her and Boz, which few know. Did she ever recall that the action of Bardwell *v.* Pickwick was based on her own case, and parodied many of the incidents? Buzfuz's cross-examination was only a reproduction. This new situation must have amused Dickens. He certainly took the side of the lady.

Another writer of graceful verse was Miss Kate Macready, who in 1856 sent him a little poem, which had much pleased her father. Dickens, no doubt to please *him,* wrote of it with the greatest cordiality. He would be "truly delighted" to publish it, and it should go into the very next number they made up.

CHAPTER XX

ROBERT LYTTON, CHARLES READE, HARRISON AINSWORTH, WILLIAM JERDAN, ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER

THE son of the first Lord Lytton, Robert Lytton as he was best known, a gifted man, ambassador and poet, and father of the present Earl, also of literary tastes, I knew fairly well, and have stayed with him. I may say I have known the three generations. Robert Lytton had a cultivated taste and a genuine spirit of poesy. He was a great admirer of Dickens, and used to furnish contributions to both journals, in prose and verse. It was, however, whispered about—or rather stated openly in the Press—that his productions were not *quite* original, but adaptations from foreign languages. The truth, I fancy, was that he was attracted by any striking narrative or poetical picture written by other clever persons, and believed he could deal with them in superior fashion after his methods. He had an abundance of literary baggage. His "Lucile" is a long poem of some thousands of lines, yet he was publicly charged with plagiarising some thirty or forty lines from a French poet's work. Now I have compared the two performances, and can say that the English poet did nothing more than take the idea and tone of the passage, with a few of the images.

But in this connection is found in one of Dickens's letters an account of a rather unlucky incident, or coincidence, but which shows his unfailing delicacy and good nature. He had received, with a sort of elation, a contribution of his friend, which he begged leave to entitle "The Disappearance of John Acland," and evidently expected great things from it. It was to "go in" at once. But a month later came a communication to the Editor from some inquisitor that the writer had read the tale in *Chambers's Journal*, as he believed. On this Dickens wrote in the kindest way, professing the fullest faith in his friend, but told him bluntly that "he had not the faintest doubt that the statement was true," and that the main part of the story had been printed somewhere. Still, his friend must not think that he made any complaint. It was but a natural circumstance where a *true* story had once got into circulation, and into various hands (it had even been told at table). "There is always a possibility of such a malignant conjunction of stars where it is a true story." So he comforted his friend. "Let us shuffle cards and begin again." He desired to hear from him as soon as possible with other contributions. At the same time, he concluded that the only thing to be done was to bring the story to a finale as speedily as possible, and so be rid of it.

The author could not have felt comfortable as he read this ambiguous letter.

It was natural that Boz should apply for aid to another old friend and comrade, Douglas Jerrold of the bitter tongue, as ready always as bitter. When Boz made his request, pointing out that all the papers were to be "strictly anonymous," the cynic replied, pointing to the headlines, "To be sure, for don't I read 'Charles Dickens' at the top of every page," which was the fact.

No one could say that the conductor did not claim the assistance of the best talent, in the way of fiction, that was to be obtained. He was not one of those who fancied that reputation was a fixed quantity, and that to allow a share of it to another was to abstract it from one's own. It was in this spirit that in 1863 he introduced a novel of Charles Reade's to his readers. This was the vigorous and much admired "Hard Cash," written in the author's almost truculent style, where every sentence seems a challenge or defiance, and vehemence is the prevailing tone. This at times passionate style, a continued protest, as though existing social life were one monstrous grievance, seems exaggerated enough now. Dickens was pleased with the work. "I *must* write you one line," he wrote in September, 1863, "to say how interested I am in your story, and to congratulate you upon its admirable art, and its surprising grace and vigour, and to hint my hope at the same time that you will be able to find leisure for a little dash for the Christmas number. It would be really a great and true pleasure to me if you could."

Some of Reade's rather vehement theories, however, he felt himself obliged as Editor to disclaim in the following amiable caution and corrective. relating to a "work of fiction first published in these pages as a serial story, with the name of an eminent writer attached to it. When one of my literary brethren does me the honour to undertake such a task, I hold that he executes it on his own responsibility, and for the sustainment of his own reputation, and I do not consider myself at liberty to exercise that control over his text which I claim as to other contributors.—CHARLES DICKENS."

There is something a little awkward for the author in this disclaimer, for such it is, and it could hardly have been acceptable to the impetuous Reade. We, however, can read between the lines.

Charles Reade was an exuberant, highly-gifted man, full of a varied talent. I have noted, indeed, that most successful writers of fiction *are* often exuberant and enthusiastic—these qualities seeming to constitute a "motive force" behind their talent. He was wonderfully versatile and clever in many ways, a vehement controversialist, especially when dealing with those whom he styled contemptuously "the criticasters." He was something of a dramatist also. I see his tall, commanding figure now, his grizzled beard and curious forms of speech. He was certainly eccentric. Once, passing by his house at Albert Gate, I noticed a crowd round the little garden of his "forecourt," and found that on the wall beneath the railing he had painted in large characters the words "Naboth's Vineyard." This seemed enigmatical, but it appeared that his landlord wished to "expropriate" him, and level the whole terrace. This was just like him. It was a satisfaction to himself merely, for no one understood what the allusion was. When he had conceived a scheme he overflowed with it, and fancied that everyone ought also to overflow with it. I once lost a truly interesting dinner experience owing to this idiosyncrasy of his. It was at John Forster's, and we had, I recollect, Anthony Trollope, Elwin, Editor of the *Quarterly*, and some more of note. I found myself beside Reade. "And now," said I to myself, "I shall have an interesting time of it." But it was not so to be. It fell out that some days before he had picked up an old, rusted folio, well known to stall haunters, "The Annesley Cause," with the recovery of the title, abduction of the true heir, etc., all set forth, and was so enchanted with his find that he could think or talk of nothing else. And so during the whole of dinner and after it he rehearsed to me all the incidents, the testimony of the witnesses, with genuine indignation at the barbarous treatment of the heir—"Did I ever hear anything like it?"—until I was wearied to death.

He had already conceived an absorbing drama, also a powerful story to be made of it, and in due course both made their appearance as "The Rightful Heir," neither much affecting the public. All his pieces were weak, without spirit, suggesting written pages cut out of a novel, different from true dramatic dialogue. His one successful drama was "Masks and Faces" (afterwards published as a novel under the title of "Peg Woffington"), but that was owing to Tom Taylor, who fashioned it into proper shape. Some of his pieces were dreadful, such as "Shilly Shally" (Phœbus, what a name!), which I had to review in *The Observer*,—a painful difficulty, as he was wont to make such matters personal. Poor Reade, he might well afford to talk through a whole dinner, since he dared not eat. I recall a letter of his excusing himself from coming to dine: "Ah, little do you know of the torture of a man with no digestion at all." *

Reade, as is well known, made a great name by his "Never Too Late to Mend," an exciting tale. It entitled him with his other great work, "The Cloister and the Hearth," to be put after Dickens, Bulwer Lytton, Thackeray, and to be included in the grand novelist quartet.

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* Recently I found a plaster bust of him, which I had attempted during his lifetime, and thrown aside. It seemed to me a good likeness, so I finished it, had it cast in bronze, and presented it to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he had been Fellow and also Vice-Chancellor. The pleasant Dr. Warren "of many friends," then Vice-Chancellor, held a festival for the ceremony of presentation, when there were speeches, recollections, etc., and a very agreeable day was passed.

Most brilliant, perhaps, of this brilliant roll may be counted Talfourd, one of Boz's own circle, and one for whom he cherished equal affection and admiration. In these prosaic times of ours we can hardly conceive of the gifts which some of these geniuses united in their characters. This Thomas Noon Talfourd was at once poet, essayist, biographer, critic, dramatist, and lawyer, and, more remarkable still, was successful in all departments. His dramas, conceived in the true vein of poesy, were popular; his criticisms, dramatic and others, were of the first rank; his biography of Lamb is a standard work, and conceived in a classical spirit; he was successful at the Bar, became a serjeant, and finally a judge—wonderful indeed! Dickens had deep and sincere affection for him—witness the admiring and cordial dedication of "Pickwick," the author's first story. He wrote a touching obituary of him. Who will forget his beautiful drama of "Ion," originally set off by Macready's fine acting?

Most of us of that generation have rejoiced in the stirring adventurous novels of W. Harrison Ainsworth, a genuine writer, who firmly believed in the melodramatic adventures he set forth. He deserves far more appreciation than he has received, for he was in sooth a sort of English Alexander Dumas. The latter has long since fallen out of fashion, and I fear nowadays no one reads Ainsworth. He was of Dickens's "set," one of the group of eager, promising youths who seemed to advance in step together, for a time at least. He and Boz were on the most intimate terms, but he seems to have gradually fallen away from the *coterie*, and in Dickens's prosperous days he is altogether lost sight of. I have always fancied that a chronic impecuniosity may have had something to do with it.

But it is only recently that we have learned to appreciate the merits of this striking and dramatic romancer ("*Romancier*"), and particularly his prominent influence and high position among the literary men of his time. Forster, Jerdan and Ainsworth were invited to join in the festivity which celebrated the winding-up of "Pickwick," and all three received bound copies of the work. An interesting account of him has been given by Mr. Ellis, which shows clearly that there was then a greater spirit and enthusiasm in literary work than exists now. We are shown what ardent, animated creatures were these brilliant young men—how eager in their schemes, how united to each other, and how hospitable. It has been thought strange, and naturally so, that in Forster's *Biography* this once celebrated writer and his intimate relations with Boz and his friends should have been so ignored. I recall a pleasant dinner at Frederick Chapman's, at Twickenham, I think, where were Forster and Browning. When the latter said casually, "I met a strange, shabby creature to-day, which on examination resolved itself into Ainsworth," Forster merely said in his most casual way, "No, really, did you? God bless me!" and added nothing more.

A writer on Indian topics was Meadows Taylor, author of a once much-talked-of book, *Confessions of a Thug*. I knew him pretty well, and had had many a talk with him on his adventurous life. Bayle St. John was also one of these writing travellers.

William Jerdan was an occasional contributor. He was Editor of the *Literary Gazette*, at one time a great power. He was a friend and admirer of Boz, and one of the earliest followers of Pickwick, assisting at the winding-up dinner of Pickwick. In that diverting chronicle there is a veiled allusion to an odd escapade of his which few wot of. Mr. Pickwick, it will be recollected, had his portrait painted and hung up at the club, intended to commemorate the Cobhamstone discovery, "a portrait, by the way, which he did not wish to be destroyed when he grew a few years older." A highly cryptic allusion this which has "intrigued" many. It was retained in the early editions, but was soon omitted altogether. Still, what did it mean ?

The story is a strange one, and quite Pickwickian. Maclise had painted a portrait of Sir J. Soane and presented it to the Literary Fund, where it was hung up in the Board Room. It was said that Sir John was quite content with the compliment, until some officious friends persuaded him that it was an unflattering likeness, and, as it were, "a libel" on his features. Inflamed by these suggestions, he requested the Committee to remove it, and on their refusing to do so, announced that he would no longer subscribe to the funds. A friend of his, this Jerdan, then took up the matter, and, making his way to the Board Room, cut the picture to pieces ! This wanton and barbarous act, which decided the question in dispute, appears to have had no serious consequences for the author, and after some threatenings the matter was dropped.*

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* Dickens was ever inclined to such riddles and allusions. Thus, in his account of the Seven Dials in the *Sketches* he described a mysterious lodger "never known to buy anything beyond an occasional pen, except half pints of coffee, penny loaves, and ha'porths of ink, so his fellow-lodgers naturally suppose him to be an author, and rumours are current in the Dials *that he writes poems for Mr. Warren.*" Another instance of his fondness for making mystic allusions to the disastrous blacking episode.

I knew well Mrs. Procter, *née* Anne Skepper (an odd name enough), and one which corresponded with her nature. Her letters were always amusing.

The history of the Procter family is truly interesting and not a little romantic. The father was an elegant poet and essayist, friend of "Elia" and of his set, a cultivated writer in many ways; the wife, a woman of extraordinary cleverness and shrewd observation and unusual acerbity of speech. "Our Lady of Bitterness," she was sometimes called. Her daughter, Adelaide Anne, was a poetess of charming tone, grace and feeling, filled with a genuine religious feeling, to which her all but holy life responded. There was a second daughter, who, I think, made no particular mark. One could have wished, in making a complete picture of Adelaide Anne, that she should have had personal charm of face and figure, but her face was rather plain, though not uninspired.

How romantic is the little story that Boz used to tell his friends of how he came to discover, in a humble, obscure writer of verses, a sort of fairy princess whom he had known all the time. He recounts it thus in a pleasant tale addressed to the authoress herself:—

"Only yesterday week, when we were 'making up' 'The Poor Travellers,' as I sat meditatively poking the office fire, I said to him, 'Wills, have you got that Miss Berwick's proof back of the little sailor's song?' 'No,' he said. 'Well, but why not?' I asked him. 'Why, you know,' he answered, 'as I have often told you before, she don't live at the place to which her letters are addressed, and so there's always difficulty and delay in communicating with her.' 'Do you know what age she is?' I said. Here he looked unfathomably profound, and returned, 'Rather advanced in life.' 'You said she was a governess, didn't you ?' said I. To which he replied in the most emphatic and positive manner, 'A governess.' He then came and stood in the corner of the hearth, with his back to the fire, and delivered himself like an oracle concerning you.

"He told me that early in life (conveying to me the impression of about a quarter of a century ago) you had your feelings desperately wounded by some cause, real or imaginary—'It does not matter which,' said I, with the greatest sagacity—and that you had then taken to writing verses. That you were of an unhappy temperament, but keenly sensitive to encouragement. That you wrote after the educational duties of the day were discharged. That you sometimes thought of never writing any more. That you had been away for some time 'with your pupils.' That your letters were of a mild and melancholy character, and that you did not seem to care as much as might be expected about money. All this time I sat poking the fire with a wisdom upon me absolutely crushing; and finally I begged him to assure the lady that she might trust me with her real address, and that it would be better to have it now, as I hoped our further communications, etc., etc., etc. You must have felt enormously wicked last Tuesday, when I, such a babe in the wood, was unconsciously prattling to you. But you have given me so much pleasure, and have made me shed so many tears, that I can only think of you now in association with the sentiment and grace of your verses."

This Adelaide Anne Procter, whose dramatic and touching verses have since enjoyed such popularity, and were introduced to the public by a preface written by Dickens himself, was an interesting woman. She had true religious and devotional sentiment, and later became an earnest Catholic. Her life was, indeed, one of sacrifice and suffering. Her verses hold a special place in public estimation, and are still in much favour for recitations from their dramatic and earnest tone, as well as for the originality of subject and treatment.

CHAPTER XXI

EDMUND YATES. HOGARTH. ANDREW HALLIDAY. GRENVILLE MURRAY. ROBERT HAWKER. WILLIAM AND MARY HOWITT.

EDMUND YATES and G. A. Sala were the two gay and intrepid *frondeurs* of Dickens's journals. Their lack of the sense of responsibility gave him some trouble which he bore good-humouredly enough, for he liked his "Two Cossacks," who, once having secured their serial "run," were inclined to take freedoms. Yates wrote nearly twenty novels which were spirited enough. It was curious that he should have died at the Savoy Hotel, and his handsome wife at the Carlton. He must have been a man of enterprise as well as of some genius to have founded a new and successful form of publication—that of the *Society Paper*—which has now held its ground for thirty years. The system has leavened all journals, and has reached its acme in our time. He belonged to the jocund clique formed of the two Broughs, two Drapers, Halliday and others. The very name Yates seemed to me to connect us with Garrick and his time, and while his connections were theatrical, and associated with the old Adelphi, Dickens really liked him, and always used his services for description of some striking event, such as the Heenan and Sayers fight or an account of the Derby, and no one could do these things better. He was "on" all manner of papers, and wrote farces for the theatres with his friend Montagu Williams, and very lively farces they were. Later he collected his clever sketches in a couple of agreeable volumes. But his chief cleverness was shown in his contriving to live on his slender receipts. He never "went under," as it is called. The unfortunate Thackeray episode involved his friend Dickens, who loyally and manfully stood by him, though thereby he sacrificed his friendship with his great rival. But there is no doubt that Yates was in the wrong, and that the affair was badly managed, and with too much heat.*

After a long series of struggles—ups and downs—but all the while keeping his head above water, he was lucky in making one grand *coup*. I recall meeting him on board a steamer bound for Calais, when he confided to me a project of his. "I am at last all right," he said, "and on my feet! I have struck oil." And then he related how he had set up *The World*, and that the notion had "caught on." And so it had, for it was a success from the start. He had long, in the *Illustrated Times*, adopted the system of supplying "gossipy" social notes as a "snapper up" of trifles, and very amusing were his snappings up. His unlucky sketch of Thackeray was of the future *World* pattern. In the *Times* he signed always "A Lounger at the Clubs," which amused Boz wonderfully. I once heard him say: "Droll notion that lounging at the clubs, for Edmund, who does not belong to a single club." There was no malice in the speech, but these inconsistencies were with Boz irresistible. You would see his eyes beginning to twinkle with fun, then his cheeks wrinkling with anticipatory enjoyment. The jest was coming, and must out at last. But Yates was perfectly right in his anticipations. The journal was a prodigious success, and for the rest of his days he was to live at his ease and in comfort.

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* An impartial person familiar with the incident must decide against Thackeray, who actually made it a charge against Dickens that he had given advice to Yates in the matter!

Sufficient importance has hardly ever been allowed to the very considerable position held by Boz's father-in-law, George Hogarth, who, from every point of view, might be considered a rather remarkable person. As a solicitor he had disentangled Sir Walter Scott's affairs, and won the praise of the novelist for his useful sagacity. He had marked literary tastes, associating with Wilson and others. He had a good knowledge of music, could criticise, compose, play the violincello. He was at last engaged on the *Morning Chronicle*. The gifts of the young Dickens attracted him, and when he became director of the paper he gave him the commission to write some of the lively papers which helped to make Boz famous. For this Boz made due recompense when he had the opening, for when editing *Bentley's*, he inserted Hogarth's rather dry papers, chiefly drawn from old French memoirs. He also found his way to *Household Words*. The young writer became his son-in-law, and got his new relation appointed to the post of musical critic to the *Daily News*. He was also connected with the *Illustrated London News* as musical critic.

Hogarth died from a fall downstairs curiously enough in the very year of his son-in-law's death. His wife was a daughter of George Thomson, well remembered for his musical connection with Burns, and she brought him no less than fourteen children. His musical, scientific and other works form almost a library. This record is rather a singular one, and all but brings Boz into touch with Sir Walter Scott himself.

Scott lived sufficiently long to meet the young writer, Dickens, but Miss Hogarth has assured me that she never heard that they had met. This is only a *negative* presumption, perhaps! I have an impression that they must have met, that they *ought* to have met! I cannot understand how a clever writer on such intimate terms with Scott as Hogarth could not have taken a sort of pride in introducing his young friend. Dickens had paid a visit or two to Edinburgh before Scott's death.

In collecting together this band of versatile followers, Dickens gives further proof of his ability and tact, and yet in selecting and testing their merits he must have added yet another load to his editorial labours. When we survey the abundant list, one is astonished at their ability and versatility. Take "Jack" Hollingshead, for instance. He was a journalist to begin with, and what is called a "smart" one. He was "on" the rather lively, if not brilliant *Illustrated Times*, written by a number of ever-young Bohemians—Edmund Yates, two Broughs and others who admired and followed Dickens very closely, notably at Christmas time, when they would describe with affectionate pathos the return of the wanderer on Christmas Eve, celebrated in wassail and other drinks. "Jack" wrote plays and farces, and wrote them well. He was also dramatic critic of the *Daily News*. It will be seen from the character of most of his writings that he well deserved the name "Practical John." His chief works were "Ragged London," "Plain English," "Concise History of the Exhibition of 1851," "Odd Journeys in and out of London," etc. All these were full of spirit and statistical knowledge, and he was accordingly valued by Dickens as a "safe" writer. But his most important achievement was the Gaiety Theatre, a name copied from the Theatre de la Gaieté, which flourished in Paris under the Empire, and whose *métier* was the exhibition of crowds of young women, though it is only fair to say that he also favoured "the legitimate." Still the credit—or discredit—of the system is certainly due to this *entrepreneur*.*

I was glad to meet him just before his death at a Boz Club dinner, when I found him fresh and brilliant as ever, and where he presently delivered a cheery speech of reminiscences. That was about the opening of the present century. Unhappily, these pleasant channels of memory are now all closed up, and there is no one but myself to call up such reminiscences.

Andrey Halliday was a *dour*, hard-headed Scot, whom Dickens found most useful to him in emergencies; as when he put him on to the duty of finishing off Sala's derelict novel "Quite Alone." I recall him at the close of the melancholy sale of Dickens's effects, when he triumphantly showed me one of the "Pickwick Ladles" which he had secured, out of the half dozen "put up," for about fifty pounds or so. His articles were always practical and business-like, but with little or no fancy or imagination. His strength lay in the drama. He wrote many effective little pieces which were highly popular, but he particularly distinguished himself by his adaptations from Scott's and Dickens's novels, such as "Amy Robsart" from "Kenilworth," and "Little Em'ly" from "Copperfield." This latter was a particularly good and effective piece, set off by some admirable acting. A grotesque American actor made an extraordinary, vivid portrait of Micawber, richly coloured, and perfectly realising the author's idea, though I believe Boz was not *quite* satisfied. There was also a sketch of Rosa Dartle given with much intensity and accuracy by an actress named Addison. Emery too was excellent as Emily's guardian. The whole was highly popular, and it seemed to prove that nearly all Dickens's stories are well suited to the stage, provided they are treated by skilled and capable dramatists and actors. The adaptation, of course, needs the very highest ability, chiefly in compression and in seizing on the vital elements. I must say that Dickens scarcely ever seemed to relish or approve the attempts made to treat his stories, though he might have considered that even an imperfect representation was useful to his reputation, and that the audience could always supply deficiencies from memory.*

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* He knew a good deal of the internal life of "the office." Scarcely a postman passed the office without leaving a bundle of manuscript, sometimes small, like a roly-poly jam pudding, sometimes large, like a small bolster. These "voluntary contributions," amounting to several hundreds in the course of the year, were always opened and looked at. I am justified in saying that during five years only two manuscripts were accepted from outside contributors, one of which had to be almost re-written, and the other was used with a little editorial alteration. This statement may favour the idea that Dickens's journal was a "close borough," open only to a select few who had earned a public reputation; but such a conclusion would be quite unjust. The conductor (Charles Dickens) and his assistant (W. H. Wills) were always only too anxious to discover new contributors—men with new ideas, fresh enthusiasm, and unhackneyed style—and Charles Dickens was the last man to say, as Thackeray did when he was forming his *Cornhill Magazine* staff, "I am afraid there are only a certain number of cabs upon the stand." Thackeray said it in no unkind spirit.

Albert Smith also found his way into the company, but to no great extent. This cheerful writer, who certainly contributed to "the public stock of harmless pleasure," had already furnished Dickens with a popular model of handbook ridiculing "Gents" and others—"Natural Histories," he called them. Boz had been issuing little manuals, sketches of "Young Gentlemen," "Young Ladies," etc.

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* Dickens would have been highly pleased and flattered could I have set before him at the time the collection I made later of these dramatised versions, for their number is incredible. It is not merely that *all* his books have been turned into plays, but that of many there are seven or eight versions—and hardly one story without two or three. Pickwick, most of all, defies the adapter.

In 1854 Dickens was to make one of his happiest "finds." A stormy character, Grenville Murray, a rather doubtful sort of diplomatist, who used his profession for finding material for "copy," became connected with the journal. Wills taking him under his patronage, used to touch up and partly write some trifling foreign sketches, which were read with some pleasure. But in 1854 Murray was able to proceed unassisted on his own course, and produced a very brilliant series of diplomatic sketches of his life at Constantinople, in which Sir Stratford Canning, with whom he had serious quarrels, was ridiculed as Sir Hector Stubble. This series was continued for a long time—indeed, made quite a sensation—and was much admired for its colour and vigour. But for the protection of Lord Palmerston he would have forfeited his position. Scurrility, however, was his foible, and it is said that the type set up by *The World*, *Vanity Fair*, and other journals, was of his devising and invention. The "Roving Englishman" became famous.

Boz was often brought into trouble by the tumultuous excesses of his writers; but I am convinced, though he extricated himself admirably, it was always at heavy cost; for, being of a nervous nature, he could not endure suspense. As he told me, rather than "have it hanging over him" he was ever for "settling" a matter out of hand, and at any cost. Some libel brought Murray a horse-whipping on a club steps; this, with other scandals, led to his quitting the country, and he died abroad.

Another interesting contributor was that strange, almost romantic character, the Vicar of Morwenstow, whose life and writings have laid such a captivating charm on friends and readers. His sincerity and high faith saved him from being a true, genuine eccentric, though, in the popular sense, eccentric he certainly was. To the general public he is best known by the familiar chorus, "And Shall Trelawney Die?" which has always been a favourite quotation, and with the authority of which he is usually credited. It is, as a fact, some two hundred years old or more. Hawker, it seems, had incorporated the lines in a clever "modern antique" ballad, which had attracted the praise and notice of Macaulay and Sir Walter Scott, but mainly on account of the taking burden or chorus, which they accepted as the work of the writer.

About the year 1852 this ballad attracted Dickens's notice, and it duly appeared in *Household Words*, thus commencing a connection that was to last for nearly thirty years. Boz was eager for more in the same Cornish vein. Thus Hawker, "There is a stir with Dickens as to my song," referring apparently to the "Tre Pol and Pen" chorus: "I am in cordial correspondence with Dickens, and I am to contribute to *Household Words*, and cannot send MS. too often." The Vicar was diligent, sending chiefly "breezy" Cornish articles, prose and verse.

John Forster, as we have seen, for a time was one of the partners in *Household Words*, but he was in truth rather a patron of the concern, occasionally contributing a paper. In one of these ventures he was a little unlucky. It was he who had furnished an account of this very Trelawney ballad, referred to above, but fell into the mistake of assuming that Hawker's additions were a portion of the genuine old fragment! Boz chuckled with enjoyment. "Of course, he makes out," he wrote sarcastically, "that there is a positive merit in having made the blunder, and that if it really has been the old, old ballad, his intention would rather have failed upon the whole. I have taken the liberty of assaulting this conclusion between the eyes, and knocking it over head and heels."* Boz always literally revelled in his friend's oddities.

The worthy Vicar seems to have become troublesome to the indefatigable Wills, the sub-editor, being always pettishly disappointed if his contribution was not instantly accepted. He would make complaint to his friends, and he would also grumble at the pay, complaining of the ten shillings sent him for a copy of verses, though this was the general scale of the paper. He likened it to the remuneration given by a solicitor to his scriveners. The ordinary poetaster's lines are about of the value that the same amount of space would cover in prose, and were rated accordingly, and here it may be said that Dickens's treatment of his contributors was truly liberal, and as just as it was liberal. For an ordinary paper by a "trading" hand he would allow a pound a page, and this was high, for the page was a very "light" one. I, however, received more than this, and superior writers were dealt with on quite a different scale.

Another contributor of an occasional kind was Florence Marryat, daughter of the well-known sea novelist. She also wrote stories which were much read, besides a few light articles for the journal. One of her modes of support was going round with a sort of "show" or entertainment. Another contributor's name which, as the saying is, "touches a chord," is that of Lady Duff Gordon, a very clever woman of whom, in my youth, we used to hear a great deal. Everything seemed to be "by Lady Duff Gordon"—travels, stories, letters—but above all she had the odd taste of being a perpetual *translator*, even of works on such stiffish subjects as Niebhur's *Roman History*. I fancy she did a good deal of what is called "job" work.

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* R. Lehmann, p. 90.

In 1855 a Miss King sent him a story which he much fancied. "I think it possesses very great merit," he wrote. But there were serious objections. "The people do not sufficiently work out their own purposes in dialogue and dramatic action. You are too much their exponent." The boy was a little too slangy, but he regarded it as the author's intention to elevate such a character and soften it.

The amiable and interesting Howitts—William and Mary—were also in the corps of contributors, and their tranquil, unexcited style had admirers. They were the chosen and accepted interpreters of the calm country life and rural scenes. "My dear Sir," Boz wrote to William Howitt in November, 1850, "I am extremely sorry, on reading your story, to find that we have anticipated it, and have a paper on the same subject (by Horne) in a number which has been at press some days. I like yours very much, and know the Captain perfectly. Nothing but what I have mentioned would have stood in its way." Next day, however, he changed his mind. "I will read your paper—an admirable little thing—immediately, and also let you know about the space in the Xmas number. Pray let me assure you that there is nothing at all like the Captain in Horne's paper."

His friend and worshipper, Mary Boyle, I used to meet at Gad's Hill. A quaint, curious little personage, always eager for amateur plays and country house visits. Every night she enjoyed the special privilege of receiving a kiss from the amiable Boz when wishing him good-night, coming up to him shyly like a child, with her candle in her hand. The spirituelle Mrs. Browning chose for the subject of a poem, as I believe her single contribution, Hiram Power's *Greek Slave*, then attracting attention and exaggerated praise. Mrs. Chisholm, notable for her interest in the emigration of women, also wrote for him.

The editor found a very useful assistant for a certain kind of work in the Rev. Mr. White, who was a sort of handyman, one on whom he could always depend for a stirring melodramatic story. Although a rector, and a good working pastor, he wrote for the stage, and I remember a rather stirring drama of his called "The King and His Commons," besides other works. This theatrical experience helped him when gruesome tales were wanted for the Christmas Number, and sometimes when the Editor could not find what he wanted White was at hand with the exact thing desired. Boz was very partial to him, and it has been stated that he took a house specially at Bonchurch so as to be near him.

We find also a novelist who was then in very high favour, but whose name would now suggest no idea whatever to the existing generation. This was Miss Mulock, whose "Head of the Family" and other works were on every drawing-room table. There was a taste then for a sort of placid treatment of domestic life, and there were many women writers who rather "twaddled along," as in the case of the worthy Yonge, with her amazing work, "The Heir of Redclyffe."

Another contributor of this class whom he welcomed with enthusiastic cordiality was the authoress of "Holme Lee," Miss Harriet Parr, who in 1855 sent him a serial tale with which he was delighted. Who recalls the name now? Yet it was in high vogue. He read it "with the strongest emotion," and thought it masterly. "It moved him more than he could express, and had completely unsettled him for the day." It is astonishing in our prosaic days to read of this generous spontaneous enthusiasm on the part of an editor. He was not, however, able to make use of it, as its length and shape was unsuited, but he eagerly invited her assistance.

CHAPTER XXII

LE FANU. WALTER THORNBURY. H. F. CHORLEY. COVENTRY PATMORE. CHARLES LEVER. JAMES PAYN.

One of the last story-tellers, engaged, I think, on my suggestion by the Editor, was the late J. S. Le Fanu, a novelist who made an extraordinary impression with his weird tale "Uncle Silas." As has been the fate of so many others, he was destined to be the author of but one single success. Dickens, however, died before his story could appear. Though he wrote abundantly he was a man of exquisite taste and genuine humour, descended from the Sheridan family, and with much of the great Brinsley's quaint fancies. We were the warmest friends, and for years I used to arrive every night about ten o'clock and stay till one o'clock or so listening to his strange talk and stories. But if he had Sheridan's humour he had also the deep resentments of the race, that curious moody suspicion after an injury that was more supposed than real. I recall an instance of this, associated with Boz.

Liking him so much and being under obligations to him, I hoped to bring him and my great friend together. An opportunity came. When travelling round on his Readings, Boz agreed to dine with us, a special favour which he hardly ever accorded on account of his fatigue, and a choice party was made up, including the genial and talkative politician, Whiteside, as well as my dear friend. The guests were assembling, and Le Fanu came late. I was about to introduce him, when I found he was gone. He had descried an old irreconcilable enemy in the politician. It was certainly awkward, and I ought to have avoided arranging such a meeting. Later on, however, I mentioned Le Fanu's wishes to Dickens, who, it seems, cordially accepted his aid, and having had a high opinion of his talent, at once agreed to make use of his service. "Willing to Die" was, I think, the rather odd name of his novel.* It was at this dinner, by the way, that a political and garrulous friend made his *mal à propos* speech: "Now I ask you, Mr. Dickens, is there a single writer to-day who can be named with Walter Scott?"

One of Dickens's most valuable hodmen, as they may be termed, who had a knack of fashioning articles out of any material whatever, was Walter Thornbury, who month after month for years supplied manufactured papers on any old material, which he *stewed* down and flavoured to the taste, much as Sam Weller's sausage maker flavoured his cats, according to the demand and season. Old trials, old riots, runaway matches, duels, were all treated in this skilful way, and read like modern tales. The writer's imagination helped him, and he contrived to write as though he had been present at the incidents. These things were supplied for years under the title of "Old Stories Retold."

Thornbury travelled about for various journals, but I doubt if either he or Boz could afford such expensive commissions. The latter always declared that he was one of his most valuable assistants, owing, perhaps, to the writer's *penchant* for murders and violent scenes. He wrote well on Art, and at least had much artistic feeling.

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* It was curious that in his own land the natives persistently sounded his name Leffānew, whereas in England he was quite correctly spoken of as Le Fānu. He was of an old Hugenot family.

It would be a harsh or rough thing to say that he was a professional bookmaker, but no one knew better the art of lighting on a subject that would bear enriching by cuttings, extracts from museums, memoirs, *Gentleman's Magazine* and the like. He had, however, a certain enthusiasm which covered up all this *trade* view.

Poor Thornbury flourished much so long as the reign of his Editor lasted. He might count steadily on his eternal series of "Old Stories Retold," with the "Cato Street Conspiracy" and the rest. But with the departure of his friend he seemed to descend steadily. He was a confirmed bachelor of long standing. But he married rashly it seemed to me, and I am afraid died in distressful straights.

Dickens's prompt, straightforward manner of business with his assistants is well shown in a letter to Thornbury, who had suggested a sheaf of subjects for the eternal "Old Stories Retold."

DEAR THORNBURY,

I think the "Bottle Conjurer" and the "Berners Street Hoax" too well known. Ditto Daniel Lambert's "Miss Boffin" and "Baron Lowski." The wonderful magazines and the 'Books of Celebrated Characters' have used them up. As to "The Misers' Wild Boys," yes, "Ice Winters," yes, if compounded of several experiences. "Balloons" I am doubtful about. "The Nassau Voyage" was described in an (appropriately) inflated little book done by Monck Mason, and much quoted at the time. "A Hurricane and an Earthquake" might go together. "A Memorable Inundation," a good subject. And I very much like the idea of those Algerian notes. Pray pursue it. I write from the office, where I am stopped by a bad foot on my way from Liverpool. Henry Thompson insists on my foot being in absolute repose until he releases me. May that be soon.

Though this is purely a business letter, it is lit up by quaint turns and a little humour, and it is good-natured, too, and encouraging.

I have already given Dickens's indignant letter to myself on the scurrilous attacks made on him in the Irish papers. But some further details of this grotesque episode will be interesting. Once Walter Thornbury was sent to Dublin in search of "copy," travelled in Irish cars, and made much fun or ridicule of everything he saw. This was quite *à la mode* in the *All The Year Round* system, where comic satire "spiced" everything. Such a furious storm burst forth! The Irish papers became inflamed to fury. Boz was howled at, abused in the coarsest terms; in fact, one would fancy that we were reading the American journals on his own "American Notes."

Here was this Mr. Dickens into whose lap the Irish people poured heaps of their gold and silver, and in this way did he repay them—spalpeen that he was! The noble-hearted, guileless, generous I-erish people turned into ridicule by the guest they 'd honoured! The smaller country papers were the most scurrilous. In vain the writer, Thornbury, wrote in the most humble, apologetic terms. No one cared what *he* said. Boz, who was behind, and prompter of all, was the offender. I wrote myself and pleaded hard. All was of no use. The fact was they were delighted to have the opening and "show up" a man of Boz's eminence, and a great Saxon to boot. They had, perhaps, an instinct that he had but little admiration or liking for them. He was deeply wounded and disgusted by the grossness of the language used. This was quite a novelty, for though people disapproved or disagreed, there was always present a studious and reverential respect for him. Here he was literally called names—" a vulgar cockney," etc. He could never have forgiven such treatment. As he put it in one of his forcible phrases to me: "*It has amazed me for life!*"

The truth was, and I say it reluctantly, there never was much sympathy or liking between the Irish and the great writer. He did not care for them. He loved the Scotch. He was not much read in Ireland, perhaps not wholly understood. I have been assured by a wholesale bookseller, "We sell more Dickens books in a single town in Scotland than in the whole of Ireland."

Once when I was travelling with him on his Reading Tour, and starting from the Dublin Terminus for the north, we noted a sort of dispute going on at the luggage van. On the English and Scotch lines he was always paid the compliment of never being charged for the carrying of his screens and other apparatus. Here, however, an uncouth stationmaster, as related elsewhere, was clamouring that he knew nothing about Mr. Dickens, who should pay like everyone else. In Belfast, where was "the Bar" on its Northern circuit, to which I belonged, I found a hot debate going on. Some of the juniors had proposed that Dickens should be invited to a complimentary dinner. But the older members voted it down by a great majority! It was in vain to urge that he would not accept. "It was against the Bar rule."

A short, quaint, spare little man with wiry white hair that stood up straight and was cropped short, with a low yet "squeaky" voice, such was Henry F.

Chorley, the musician, another of Dickens's devoted worshippers. He did not do much for the magazine, for his papers, being generally concerned with the abstruse things of music, could not be acceptable to the "general reader." There was one odd paper on this subject, full of his own peculiar cranks, which he deemed all important; so that he pressed it again and again on Boz, who had to resist. He was, however, so earnest and persevering that he at last prevailed. I forget its name now. He was a "true musician," a good, but severe critic, much dreaded, hospitable, and living in Eaton Place. Years before I was crossing to Ostend on a stormy night under the old rude dispensation with its miserable cockle-shell boats. There was the little Dover harbour to which you actually *walked* down from the station to the wretched "Ostend boat." The passage that night took seven or eight hours, during which I had an unhappy time. There were few passengers creeping ashore at the old yellow Ostend, with its venerable fortifications, where we found the old yellow 'bus—the *one* town 'bus—waiting to carry us to the station. There was only myself and a little wiry man with a squeaky voice—an old, seasoned traveller, who was quite unruffled, and who, as he told me, had been quite comfortable, and had slept soundly. I envied him, for I was shivering, wet and miserable. We trundled through the old town across the drawbridges, rumbling under the gateway until we stopped before the Hotel Fontaine, where he dismounted and bade me good-bye, going up to his bed. How I envied him! I had to go forward by the early train, and was trundled and "rumbled" away to the station. Years later we met at Dickens's, and on this occasion I ventured to question him. I found that he remembered the morning perfectly, with his jolting jaunt in the old 'bus, and his being set down at Fontaine's, and also, I think, the fellow-passenger. We thenceforth became friends, and he would ask me to his choice little dinners *en partie fine.*

By a curious chance it seemed to be our Editor's lot to be always gathering about him men of singular and adventurous lives. This lent colour and interest to their writing. A specimen of this double life was furnished by Dudley Costello and his sister Louisa. In early life he served as a soldier for many years, and while on foreign service we are told that he published a little newspaper in manuscript, each copy written like print. He next served under Cuvier, in Paris, painting fish for the museum. Then he illuminated miniatures, his attempts exciting great admiration. Later he became newspaper correspondent, and finally a profuse magazine writer and intimate friend of Dickens, his companion in the well-known theatricals, and a constant writer in *Household Words* and its successor.

One of the most original and at the same time interesting contributors was the brilliant, highly-strung, exaggerated and slightly-eccentric Coventry Patmore. I knew him and saw a good deal of him when he was living at his old Manor House at Hastings. The portrait by Sargent is a most faithful likeness, with its odd collar and straggling locks. He is best known by his tender poem, "The Angel in the House"; nothing can exceed the affectionate grief here displayed. The cynic, however, would smile at this and forecast the result; he was to prove, as Mr. Weller said, "A wictim of connubiality." He was difficult to get on with, for though he made sacrifices in conscientiously joining the Roman Catholic faith and built a church, he was not on terms with the clergy, because they would not allow him to control the building.

Moy Thomas was one of the conductor's most *useful* followers—safe, secure, always to be relied upon. He could supply anything that he was asked for, and, like Swift, could " write " beautifully upon a broomstick. But in dramatic criticism he found his *métier*. There he shone. Having had a long experience of dramatic critics and their ways and gifts, I may say that Moy Thomas always seemed to me to be the most *judicious* and thoughtful of the whole party. For many years the *Daily News* had the advantage of his criticisms, which were ever temperate, informing and stored with sound principles. He had an odd *penchant* on the subject of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and also wrote agreeable stories.

A word too must be said of another contributor, a composed, amiable type of man—George Manville Fenn—who would never " set the Thames " or anything else on fire, but went on his placid way steadily and usefully. He did occasional work for *All The Year Round*, but I think not very much. I cannot recall what was his special type of contribution, but he had a certain reputation for interesting domestic tales and " boys' books." He was also a useful editor, and long directed *Cassell's Magazine*.*

I have described the occasion when the jovial, obstreperous Harry Lorrequer, *i.e.* Charles Lever, was to spin one of his stories in the decorous, well-regulated pages of *A.Y.R.*, as it was familiarly abridged. But by this time the old Irish ebullience had completely abated, he wished to be "taken seriously," and to furnish the regular "novel of interest," trusting himself to the staid, respectable Blackwoods, of whom I once heard him say, "They were the only publishers who had treated him like a gentleman." An exaggeration, I fancy.

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* With his constant friendliness he engaged me to supply a serial, " The Little Stranger." To show what was the *commercial* character of the serial business in these times, I may say that this was the *third* that I was " running " in a leash at the same time.

I knew him very well, and found him a most delightful companion, as everyone did, not at all of the "rollicking" sort, but rather inclined to seriousness or quiet comedy. It was an extraordinary delusion of the public that he was a typical Irishman. He was an Englishman with Irish sympathies and deep knowledge of Irish character, which Thackeray also had in a large degree.

The name of his story was "A Day's Tour: a Life's Romance," which started in his most admirably spirited style, a young fellow going out on a day's expedition, his return in the evening being hindered by a chapter of accidents, leading him into the most wonderful adventures. I recall Wills's delight at the opening pages, rubbing his hands with enjoyment. But alas! by some unlucky chance, the author speedily grew tired of the thing; he lost his spirit, and it subsided into an unmeaning and dull Germanesque story. So that the poor, confiding Boz, who expected from everyone the faith and hearty workmanship that he could find in his own loyal heart, found himself once more, as it were, left in the lurch. The only thing was to "cut the loss," his usual practice, and wind the thing up with all speed, while he had to prepare himself to "strike in," and so restore the day. There was always an alarming necessity for this step: with any failure, down would go the circulation with accumulating force.

James Payn, that capable and very interesting writer, when he was a youth at the Woolwich Academy, became connected with Boz in a rather odd way. He sent the *Household Words* a pungent article describing minutely and not favourably the doings of the school. The Governor of the school remonstrated with the Editor, with what result I know not. However, Payn became a regular contributor and also quite a friend of Dickens, whom I have heard speak of him in friendly admiration. The number of his novels became very great. He was later on Editor of *The Cornhill*, in which he wrote some reminiscences of Boz. I recall his amiability, which must have been terribly tried by what Johnson would have called "acute arthritic pains"—gout, in fact. One time, when some papers of mine were with him, which I had quite forgotten, I thought I would call and ask about his health—he was at Waterloo Place then. I found him in an agony, his leg racked with pain; but almost his first words were, "You will forgive me for not writing about your papers." The good-natured Editor fancied I had come to know about a wretched article. I felt shocked almost. It was unusual to see an editor at his work, his leg in a rest, and he blocked up with papers ready to utter a cry at any moment.

Bryan Waller Procter, *alias* Barry Cornwall, was a placid, alert-looking old man, with venerable grey locks and a soft voice. He might have sat for old Caseby in Boz's story. At one time he was in high vogue, belonging to a cultured "set." He was the intimate of Charles Lamb, Darley and other graceful but not very remarkable poets; of Moxon, the bookseller of poets and poet among booksellers. No one has noted this extraordinary change that has taken place in the public taste as regards poetry. In those days to write poetry—or rather verses—was an elegant accomplishment, and everyone almost did it.

Another strange person, also a poet, was S. A. Heraud, who dealt in vast epics, which, moreover, for some reason were admired and popular. He was also a dramatic critic of reputation, and I think wrote some dramas. His *magnum opus*, however, was an epic, " The Descent into Hell," which prompted Douglas Jerrold's wit, and produced perhaps one of his best retorts. Heraud had stopped him abruptly. " Have you seen ' My Descent into Hell ' ? " the author asked. " No," was the answer, " *but I should like to.*"

The name Edward Pigott probably suggests to most people no idea of any kind, yet in his day no one was better known or more liked. The gentle, the amiable, the ever good-humoured Edward Pigott! Naturally he had troops of friends. He was Licenser of Plays, an office which he long held without offence, such was his tact.* He was a friend of the chief's. Boz used to give him affectionate and confidential details in his letters. It was, indeed, wonderful how he contrived to put into every letter he wrote something that was interesting.

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* But he could be summary enough on occasion. As once when a free-and-easy farce writer produced a play in which he presumed to give my name at length, christian and surname (not very common) to one of his characters. My critic brethren were, of course, much entertained. I called Edward Piggott's notice to the matter. He was as near being in a furious rage as so " mild a mannered man " could be, and before night ordered the name to be changed.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE TROLLOPES. C. H. TOWNSHEND'S BEQUEST. HORN. CHARLES KENT. HENRY MORLEY.

One of the most striking illustrations of authorship in one family is that of the Trollopes; the mother, an immensely popular writer of her day, with her two sons and daughters-in-law. As a child I can recall the amazing popularity of Frances Anne. In the forties she was the one and only "fashionable" story-teller to be read, and certainly her "Widow Barnaby" and other jovial tales gave great entertainment, and was the pattern for a whole school of such things. To the Italian Trollopes, as they may be called, Dickens was most partial. But we miss Anthony Trollope among his contributors. On the starting of the *Cornhill* Thackeray secured him, and the brilliant and pleasantly-written "Framley Parsonage" at once suited the taste of the public, and brought him fame and profit, and I dare say it caused Boz some annoyance that he had allowed this excellent writer to escape him.

I well recall the earnest admiration with which the Editor spoke of a short, pathetic tale which filled a few numbers, and was called "Aunt Margaret's Trouble." It seemed to me rather of the "goody-goody" or household pattern, but I have no doubt he was right in his view. It was written by, I believe, Mrs. Trollope, *née* Ternan, then living in Italy. I am not certain as to this, but I am as to the rapturous way in which Boz praised it. The authoress was presently given a commission for a long and serious novel called, I think, "Mabel's Progress;" but as the elder Weller said, it was "Unekeval, Sammy," perhaps a certain "vaulting" ambition interposed.

When Dickens had departed Anthony Trollope was writing for Thackeray in the *Cornhill Magazine*, and now seemed to have the field clear before him. A writer who was receiving three and four thousand pounds for a novel may have been found too costly an article for Boz; but after his death Anthony Trollope's reputation being, I suppose, somewhat "cheapened," he contributed under the son's management to *All the Year Round*, notably the oddly-named "Is He Popenjoy?" Trollope's brother, Thomas Adolphus Trollope, who had strong Italian tastes, had early made acquaintance with Dickens, and though he lived most of his life in Italy, contributed a good deal to the two journals, chiefly on Italian topics and subjects. He wrote many novels, and wrote profusely and rapidly, but had not the gay facility of his brother. His wife was also a diligent contributor to Dickens's journals, her papers also having an Italian tone.

Other minor workers were the author of the "Night Side of Nature," a once much-talked-of book; Percival Leigh, author of "Mr. Pepys His Diary;" Blanchard Jerrold and Edmund Ollier, who like Forster was a link with Elia; James Hannay, George Meredith and others. How familiar were all these names then!

Another "adventurer" contributor was Laing Meason, who had been a "common soldier," and had seen service in various parts of the world. He wrote accounts of his travels in India, and wrote exceedingly well. These papers were highly popular, and were continued for a long time. Such an adventurous performer would have a piquant attraction for the Editor.

What a character was the worthy Peter Cunningham —"Peter" with everybody, son of Alan of that ilk—the well-schooled, deeply-read antiquarian, whose famous "Handbook to London" came into life before anyone had taken up the subject, for he was a "dungeon of letters." His knowledge of antiques, memoirs, obscure Walpolean allusions and gossip, was amazing, and he was all but alone in the knowledge. No one but he could furnish a complete history of the Court Beauties at Hampton Court. *There* was his line. His papers for *Household Words* had to be "scissored" a good deal to get rid of their dry antiquarianisms. But he had a pleasant style of his own, and had trained himself by a most agreeable column of odds and ends furnished weekly to the *Illustrated London News*, where he was succeeded by another piquant contributor to *Household Words*, Sala. Poor "Peter" was said to have a weakness for his national drink, and with but small power of resistance.

There was a cultured ex-clergyman who had furnished a contribution or so to the paper, and was one of Boz's ardent admirers. This was Chauncy Hare Townshend. He carried this worship to his grave, for in his will left his friend a sum of £1,000, but charged him with the duty of sorting out a huge chestful of *religious* papers, notes, speculations, which he seemed to think only needed setting in due order by his legatee's care!

I see the faithful follower at a little dinner at Forster's seated opposite his chief, and devotionally, *à la* Boswell, "drinking in" every word. When he ventured to speak it was in a low, subdued voice. Boz was kind and encouraging, and "played round him," as Garrick used to do with his old friend Johnson, with a gentle humour. He was, however, scarcely prepared for the religious executorship, but having undertaken it, carried it out in sound, thorough style. How he must have enjoyed it all the time. He must have particularly relished calling himself all through "*The Literary Executor*" (a sly touch at the passage in the will).

Dickens's exquisite sense of humour, his ever twinkling eyes, revealing his enjoyment, as the hidden meaning dawned upon him, must have been highly tickled as he found what a comical testamentary duty had been cast upon him by his friend. He really attempted to give a conscientious solemn account of what was desired of him, and with this aim he detailed all his efforts to carry out the sacred trust. Gravely as he does it and earnestly, it is impossible not to see that he is highly amused by his function, but he does his best to tell his tale and excite all respect for his serious friend. His account of his trust is exquisitely comic without the slightest intention in that way on his part. Let us listen to him.

"MR. CHAUNCY HARE TOWNSHEND died in London on the 25th of February, 1868. His will contained the following passage:—

(Thus, Boz.)

"'I appoint my friend Charles Dickens, of Gad's Hill Place, in the County of Kent, Esquire, my literary executor; and beg of him to publish without alteration as much of my notes and reflections as may make known my opinions on religious matters, they being such as I verily believe would be conducive to the happiness of mankind.'

"In pursuance of the foregoing injunction, the Literary Executor so appointed (not previously aware that the publication of any *Religious Opinions* would be enjoyned upon him), applied himself to the examination of the numerous papers left by his deceased friend. Some of these were in Lausanne, and some were in London. Considerable delay occurred before they could be got together, arising out of certain claims preferred and formalities insisted on, by the authorities of the Canton de Vaud. When at length the whole of his late friend's papers passed into the Literary Executor's hands, it was found that *Religious Opinions* were scattered up and down through a variety of memoranda and note-books, the gradual accumulation of years and years. Many of the following pages were carefully transcribed, numbered, connected, and prepared for the press; but many more were dispersed fragments, originally written in pencil, afterwards inked over, the intended sequence of which, in the writer's mind, it was extremely difficult to follow. These again were intermixed with journals of travel, fragments of poems, critical essays, voluminous correspondence, and old school-exercises and college themes, having no kind of connection with them.

"To publish such materials 'without alteration,' was simply impossible. But finding everywhere internal evidence that Mr. Townshend's *Religious Opinions* had been constantly meditated and reconsidered with great pains and sincerity throughout his life, the Literary Executor carefully compiled them (always in the writer's exact words), and endeavoured in piecing them together to avoid needless repetition. He does not doubt that Mr. Townshend held the clue to a precise plan, which could have greatly simplified the presentation of these views; and he has devoted the first section of this volume to Mr. Townshend's own notes of his comprehensive intentions. Proofs of the devout spirit in which they were conceived, and of the sense of responsibility with which he worked at them, abound through the whole mass of papers. Mr. Townshend's varied attainments, delicate tastes, and amiable and gentle nature, caused him to be beloved through life by the variously distinguished men who were his compeers at Cambridge long ago. To his Literary Executor, he was always a warmly-attached and sympathetic friend."

I always fancy that I can recognise in "Cousin Feenix" a sketch of the ex-clergyman. He was, indeed, a living "Cousin Feenix." With such a person before his eyes, it was difficult for Boz to ignore so telling a figure. Chauncey Hare Townshend had all the gentle amiability and softness of "Cousin Feenix," with a sort of old-fashioned simplicity and aristocratic bearing.

It was remarkable that after Boz had come upon the scene, and with such amazing success, it became necessary for journalists and precarious writers almost to fight for a place in his journals. As we look back we can make out many a rough figure who combined with his writing much that was adventurous and shifty. Such was Richard Horne, or "Hengist," as he quaintly signed himself, who seemed to have combined the learning or at least studies of Dr. Maginn with a strangely wild and boisterous career.

He was at Sandhurst, and studied for the East India Service, but, we are told, "received no appointment." Then he took service with the Mexicans, and had a post in the battles during the Spanish War. Here he "had also a narrow escape from a shark." Then came yellow fever, a visit to West Indies, a shipwreck, the fracture of two ribs, a mutiny of the crew on the voyage home, succeeded by the ship taking fire, all of which was exciting enough. He then turned to periodical writing —poetical tragedies—corresponding with Mrs. Browning, with all manner of experiments in various departments. "Orion," a grand epic, which he sold, or rather offered, for a farthing! It would be impossible to supply a tithe even of the names of his varied works. Boz evidently took an interest in him, and gave his poems a place in the *Household Words.* He also attempted some arrangement with him for papers on Australia, when he visited that country with William Howitt. It is gravely recorded that "he was a marvellous whistler, played the guitar and sang."

Of this Hengist, or Horne, Dickens had a high opinion as a writer, though in other respects he seems to have given him some trouble, as most of the erratic geniuses who became connected with him invariably seemed to do. When Horne went to Australia he was given a commission to send home local articles, such as "A Digger's Diary," and illustrations of the mode of life out there. There is a hint of failure in a letter: "It is evident that Horne (notwithstanding his outfit of tent, cart and what not) has abandoned the digging idea, and already begun to live upon the reserved fund sent out to ensure the capability of his return. I am afraid this looks unpromising." And again, "I am concerned to see that he supposes the arrangement with Mrs. Horne never to have been discontinued." This lady had "shown secrecy and reserve," etc. "The arrangement, I suppose, must be resumed." Poor amiable, much-enduring Dickens!

Dutton Cook, an odd name, was another of the well-trained "manufacturers" of wares on the journal, as I may call them. He was deeply read in old dramatic lore, stage memoirs, actors' lives. "Doran" gossip, all in a dry-as-dust fashion, and these heterogeneous materials he had the knack of fashioning into rather interesting articles written in a solemn, literal style. Thus he would give us the "O.P. Riots," the Macready "rows" in the States, the first appearances of Kean, Garrick and others. The deft Wills was at hand to "clap on" lively, suggestive titles.

This Dr. Doran was also a skilful hand at this sort of thing, and I think introduced the system of making old details modern and readable, "boiling them," it might be termed.

I could expatiate long on another faithful follower and worshipper, the exuberant, affectionate, romantic poet-journalist, Charles Kent, whose guide seemed to be impulse. No one knew or contrived to know so many *littérateurs* of all degrees—Bulwer Lytton, Dickens, Leigh Hunt, Ainsworth, Charles Lamb. His life seemed to me always a tide of misfortune, one succeeding the other, and he had, as the Irishman said, to struggle against a large family. He was a pleasing poet, a good editor, and well read, but unluckily invested his all in a decaying paper, the old and once famous *Sun*, of which he made nothing, and which actually died in his hands of inanity. It was, however, a great inducement to be proprietor and editor of this once famous newspaper. His chief consolation was to use it for the service of his beloved Dickens, who never had a more faithful follower. He had the strange and pathetic privilege of being the last to whom Boz addressed himself on the fatal day of his seizure.* Poor Kent!

This worthy poet-editor was something of a character. No one had such sore troubles; but he could dismiss all thought of such things at a moment's notice, and become as cheerful as the most prosperous of the company. I have witnessed these alternations from a deep despair to the happiest humour, just, indeed, as Mr. Micawber had the art of doing. I regarded him always as a link with the days of Leigh Hunt and even Charles Lamb.

He had a really fine literary taste, though somewhat florid and "romantic," and edited Charles Lamb's works excellently. His literary acquaintances had been wonderful—Leigh Hunt, the Procters, with Landor, were all well known to him. But, alas! he was mostly unlucky, and nothing seemed to go well with him. It was he who so successfully organised the gigantic send-off banquet to Boz on his departure for the States. On the whole, I do not think he did very much for the two journals, save furnishing an occasional copy of verses. I had many and many a talk with him at our club about the literary folk he had known, and used to be amused and even astounded at the curious details he would relate. The first Lord Lytton was his warm friend and patron, and with him he had some odd experiences. Strange to say, he was so mercurial that his spirits seemed to rise with his troubles.

There were some contributors with quaint, grotesque names. One signed officially "Sofy Toddles"; another "Miss Tomkins." "Costick" had a Dickens flavour, so had "Capper Spillan," "Postano," "Van Corrin," and best of all "Broderiss." John Oxenford was long dramatic critic to *The Times*, when he could make and unmake reputations. In those days such a critic had enormous power. He always attended in a sort of state, being led to a private box, and was followed by a sort of aide-de-camp—an Irish gentleman on the Press I think.

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* This, however, is not quite clear, though the letter is thus exhibited among the curios of the British Museum; for there was another written to someone else on that ultimate day, and both were likely to have been dispatched by the same post.

Of all the contributors I fancy Henry Morley was the most useful and most frequent. He seems to have had the privilege of "nosing" out writers with something curious or interesting to tell. These were shaped and trimmed and adapted by Morley himself, often too Wills and Morley and even Boz joined together in the shaping. Wills, Boz and Morley in one paper! Professor Morley, whom I knew, was as thoroughly good-natured as he was clever. He seems to have been a sort of "man-of-all-work" to the Journal, doing "odd jobs," co-operating with any writer who wanted help—a most useful sort of person, in short, "to have in an office." His little volume of dramatic criticism was a sort of amateur's diary of a visit to the theatre, but so shrewd and conscientious are the criticisms that they have become a valuable record. Later he was made a Professor of English.

CHAPTER XXIV

BOZ'S METHODS OF "DECLINING WITH THANKS"

One of the most amazing things in this truly super-editor was the all but Herculean pains and labour he expended in informing contributors that—he did not need their services. He would kindly reason, expostulate, warn, explaining why he could not be complaisant, and all this seriously. I have before me at this moment a series of letters to a foolish lady, who persisted in forcing her wares on him, in which he showed himself patient and indulgent to the end. He even consented "to see her at the office," and talk it over—astonishing indeed!

In an autograph catalogue I came on a little note from Boz, and it may be said that in these lists the "knowing" collector will find a vast store of extracts from Boz's letters, often of a very private and poignant nature. It was to Parkinson—"Joe," as he was to his friends, who wrote a good deal for *All the Year Round,* though not for *Household Words.* It runs: "I think all the subjects good. 'The Derby' seems to me the least promising, but I may not catch it from your point of view. My boy is laid up at Wimbledon (he is head boy there now, and going to Cambridge) with a lamed knee," etc. All who knew "Joe" Parkinson liked and even loved him—a tall, burly fellow with a hearty manner. He was a business man, like "Practical John" Hollingshead, and was very useful to the Editor for serious and commercial topics. He was with us until recently, throwing himself into all the movements for doing honour to Boz's memory, such as the "Boz Club" and "Dickens Fellowship." He had one little defect for so good-humoured a fellow —he seemed to lack the valuable sense of humour. I remember a reading of the Pickwick Trial which was positively lugubrious—given aboard a P. and O. steamer to amuse (!) the passengers.

A friend, Frank Stone, brought Boz a contribution from a lady who seemed to invite a serious criticism, which he gave at length; in his sincerity he believed it would be of real service. He analysed with some severity. There was too much smartness, giving, he thought, the idea of effort, causing weariness; everything was too much patronised and condescended to.

To his own men he would give a few short, sharp words of criticism, indicating the fault and the remedy Thus to Yates: "The opening is excellent, but it passes too completely into the Irishman's narrative, does not light it up, does not carry through, as I think it should with a certain indefinable subtleness, the thread with which you began your weaving."

Thornbury would send him a large list of "sundries" for the melodramatic "Old Stories Retold," which were returned to him with marginal notes of acceptance or rejection, and humorous comments, such as "Fighting Fitzgerald, never mind him." "Lord Mohun's Duel—YE–E–E–S. Brunswick Theatre—more yes than no. Vauxhall and Ranelagh—most decidedly. Don't forget Miss Burney. Smugglers—no, overdone." Thornbury had been indiscreet in making some rash statement as to the Bedford family. "Certainly," said Boz, "I acquit you of blame in the Bedford Case."

In a letter to Mrs. Gaskell, who was introducing a candidate, he wrote, in 1853:—

"I am sorry to say that I cannot have the pleasure of accepting. They possess no kind of characteristic to render them available. Between ourselves—and not for the information of *their authoress*—they are of that intensely dreary and commonplace description to which not even the experience of this place reconciles my wondering mind. Everybody could write such things, I imagine, but how anybody can contentedly sit down to do it is inscrutable. Don't you feel the same astonishment? People don't plunge into churches and play the organs without knowing the notes or having the ghost of an ear. Yet fifty people a day will rush into manuscript for these leaves only, who have no earthly qualification but the actual physical art of writing. Wills is ill, and I am at this moment sitting (up to the neck) in a quagmire of these productions."

How pleasantly is here touched off the mania for writing and the eternal *cacoethes scribendi.* He never economised his lively humours, but scattered them freely in his letters.

So far back as 1857, when struggling, he wrote to an aspirant, W. J. Clement:—

"Your note received this morning amazes me. Within two or three days after the receipt of the poor boy's manuscript I returned it to you in a letter replying to yours on the subject. . . . I believe I told you in effect that there were many little points of merit in the juvenile production, but that I saw no signs in it of the author being able to make an advance on a very general kind of ability. . . . I have an impression that I finished by saying that if the young man should ever wish to offer anything to *Household Words* I would read it myself."

And again, in answer to another of this form of tax:—

"But I cannot undertake to read the MS. . . . for two reasons. Firstly, because that is a request so often preferred to me that compliance would leave me no leisure for any other occupation in life. Secondly, because I know perfectly well that any publisher would form his own opinions for himself."

There was another paper, "A Doctor of Morals," on prison discipline, which he dealt with at length, and he explained why—that his assistant, when he himself was away and unable to control the paper, might be familiar with his way of viewing things, and be able to feel and judge after his chief's views. Another paper was "very well done, but I cannot make up my mind to lend my blow to the great forge bellows of puffing up work."

In July, 1855, Miss Jolly sent him a piece called "The Wife's Story," which he told her showed such great merit and unusual promise and knowledge of the human heart that he felt a strong interest in her, as he writes. His encouraging, sagacious methods in dealing with candidates of merit are admirably shown in this little transaction. He sent the story back to her with suggestions for its improvement. "You write to be read, of course," he said. "The close was unnecessarily painful, will throw off numbers who would otherwise read it, and *who will be deterred by hearsay from so doing*." How acute is this. It also wanted condensation here and there. "If you will leave that task to me I will perform the task as conscientiously and carefully as if it were my own."

Two years later we find the authoress writing to him to confess that she felt depressed, and had little confidence in her powers of success, when with much pains and good nature he reassured her. Her novel, "Mr. Arle," he had read, and could praise ; a couple of her stories, indeed, had not been very successful in the journal, "The Brook," and another. He recalled the incidents, and pointed out some defects. "But there is nothing fatal in either of these." As she had a long story ready he was willing to read and accept it, if possible. "I can give you no better counsel than to look into the life about you, and to strive for what is noblest and true." The story was sent, but did not answer. It was too large for the space. "The people do not talk as such people would, and the little subtle touches of description, which, by making the country house and the general scene real, would give an air of reality to the people, are altogether wanting."

Another invaluable precept: "Yet there are persons who write on and on, pleased with their own fluency, yet without giving a thought to such matters as these. This would, in a manner, oblige the reader to believe in the heroine, whereas for ever exploding like a great firework, without any background, she glares and wheels and hisses and goes out, and has lighted nothing." She was too convulsive, he feared, from beginning to end. "Pray consider from this point of view her brow, and her eyes, and her drawing herself up to her full height, and her being a perfumed presence, and her floating into rooms, also her asking people 'how they dare?' and the like, on small provocation. When she hears her music being played I think she is particularly objectionable." Dickens could not resist this lively *badinage;* but I fancy the authoress read with but a wounded spirit and aching heart, wondering, it may be, how "he dared." He then gave her another precious counsel: "When one is impelled to write this or that, one has still to consider how much of this will tell for what I mean? How much of it is my own wild emotion and superfluous energy, and how much remains that is truly belonging to this ideal character? And indeed, there might be added the question: Will what we think will *tell* tell on the public at all; or what we care for does the public care for?"

Boz's thorough spirit of system is shown in numbers of these scraps directed to his intelligent henchmen, who perfectly understood his ways. Fancy his having to write not only his own letters but many for other folk:—

"Private.—Sir—Mr. Charles Dickens's receipt of your letter has been delayed—he requests me to inform you—by accidental circumstances. This is one of hundreds constantly addressed to Mr. Dickens, the briefest replies to which under his own hand would absorb his whole time. You may judge how little power he has of helping such correspondents. But he charges me to assure you that if you will address to him here, to my care, any of those short pieces to which you refer, he will read them himself." Written by Boz himself.

"I wish you would return the enclosed letter by post to Miss E. S. Cary . . . . with this note from yourself. 'Madam. In Mr. Dickens's absence on his autumnal vacation I have opened your letter—confidentially, in observance of his general instructions, I beg to return it enclosed, and to add, both that I have no authority to comply with your request, and the compliance would be opposed to a principle which it has been found necessary to establish in this office.' "

" Will you return the printed scrap in the enclosed letter, with the following note from yourself. 'Madam. I have it in charge from Mr. Charles Dickens to express his regret that he cannot send a favourable reply to your letter. It is now his invariable rule in all cases in which a scrap of paper is enclosed to him, accompanied by a request for its return, to make this answer final.' "

" Please write and send by post, the letter of which I send you draft on the other side . . . 'Private. Madam. I have it in charge from Mr. Charles Dickens to express his regret that your letter is one of hundreds which it is constantly quite impossible for him to peruse.' "

To a lady who constantly offered him contributions, " the result of her leisure moments," he wrote somewhat sarcastically, " If you offer me anything you may be sure that it will be honestly read. But I am bound to add that I do not consider fiction to be a thing to be achieved in ' leisure moments.' " This was an effective *douche*. But such plain speaking was necessary.

Only two months before his death, he wrote in the same candid spirit to another postulant who had been presented by Lord Lytton, and it will be seen with what pitiless frankness he gave his plain, unvarnished opinion. This was, perhaps, the most merciful and salutary course:—

" I write to you most unwillingly, for I know that the contents of my letter cannot be acceptable to you. Besides that your ‘ River Tale ’ is a weak repetition of the form of your printed story, I find absolutely nothing in it but the manner of “ The story without an end.” The German manner will not carry the feeble matter. If you will consider the River Story apart from that manner, I think you will find it extremely commonplace, with nothing in the way of character or incident to support it. Your Ice King and the Ermine Robe and the like reappear : there is a vast deal too much of proclamation of poetry, without the appearance of the reality after the trumpets have been blown. All the stock-in-trade of the miserable little books of verses that continually accumulate on my table reappears in no new form. I call them miserable, because they make *me* so, in the evidences they present of a mistaken vocation and its attendant inevitable bitterness of disappointment.

“The true romance of poetry of human life or external nature is not to be found, so as to awaken a response in any reasonable breast, by crying, ‘ Lo here ! Lo there ! See where it comes ! Look where it goes ! This is it ! That is it ! The other is it ! ’ but in unaffectedly presenting it with the art of scanning to leave it to present itself. The River, on the contrary, is an extremely conscious river, with a great deal to say about what it has to tell, and with very little to tell after all is said. If I consulted my own ease and my own wish to be agreeable to you by disguising what I sincerely believe to be the self-evident truth, I should be equally false to you and to Lord Lytton’s presentation of you. You will get nowhere by the road you are pursuing. What qualifications you may have for attaining some amount of literary success by any other track I cannot pretend to know, having only the pleasure of knowing that you are modest and earnest in your aspirations. But you are now in a worn-out way that was never a very firm one, and has been trodden into a mere Slough of Despond. Will you claim your manuscript of me by any conveyance that you may prefer.”

A very significant letter was addressed by him to a lady who "wanted to become an authoress," a ludicrous idea, and not uncommon.* He wrote to her in rather blunt style and wording, and writers should ponder his words well: "You make an absurd though common mistake in supposing that any human creature can help you to be an authoress, if you cannot become one in virtue of your own powers. I know nothing about 'impenetrable barriers,' 'outsiders,' and 'charmed circles.' I know that anyone who can write what is suitable to the requirements of my own journal, for instance, is a person I am heartily glad to discover, and do not very often find. I cannot undertake to advise you in the abstract, as I number my unknown correspondents by the hundred."

The ardent way in which the Editor identified himself with the feelings with which capable contributors wrote was very remarkable. Of one such he would say: "It is more painfully pathetic than anything I have read for I don't know how long." There was a compliment! The story was "Gilbert Massinger," by "Holme Lee," *alias* Harriet Parr. But it was found much too long, and he had reluctantly to put it aside.

And now, the reader having accompanied me round this large panorama of literary scenes and

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* A well-known actress once related to me an instance of this kind in her own profession. A young lady of good position consulted her about going on the stage, but "the difficulty was" that her father would not hear of it. She remained firm in her purpose for months and years; the father, beset by entreaties from her and friends, at last gave way, and formally gave his consent. The girl rushed to her friend in triumph. It was all settled, as she fancied. The thing was done, and she had triumphed. She was much aggrieved when the friend did not do the rest—that is, supply her with a suitable opening "at the Lyceum," or some important theatre, rather than with dramatic talent in which she was wholly deficient. She had been treated unfairly, she protested; she had done her part, it was for her friend to do the rest.

CHARLES DICKENS

BUST OF CHARLES DICKENS BY PERCY FITZGERALD.
(In the Pump Room, Bath.)

figures, I would ask, does it not display a vast and varied exhibition of literary talent, most creditable to the conductor? All who contributed to it Charles Dickens had enrolled under his standard, and more or less fashioned to his purposes. What contrasted characters! What abundant talent! What magazine of our day could offer such a show. And I think it not uninteresting that I, who have been telling of them and their adventures, should have known them all, or nearly all.

A most original and interesting company they were, all eager to serve and give their best service to the great captain, with light article or criticism or story; yet out of the long list only a very few furnished the novel of "long breath" (*à longue haleine*), and then only a single story, or at most, I think, four, as in the case of Wilkie Collins. But as I have already mentioned, I was privileged to supply no less than five or six long novels to the journal. I ought, indeed, to be grateful to my old friend, patron, and master.

V

CHARLES DICKENS'S PUBLISHERS

Charles Dickens's Publishers

CHAPTER XXV

CHARLES DICKENS'S PUBLISHERS

DICKENS was indeed a "many-sided" man, and in any enterprise was certain to reveal true business-like energies and methods. Thus, when the occasion came he stood forward as a well-equipped publisher, well skilled in all the niceties and machinery of the craft; and no wonder, for he had been well schooled by his dealings with inferior as well as leading publishers, and had learned many a lesson. He had to begin, as of course, with the lower and more shifty class. I think it will be interesting in this place, on the conclusion of our review of his own great publishing venture, to look back to the early days of his apprenticeship, when by hard and perhaps bitter experience he came to learn all the devices of "the trade." No one has hitherto attempted to furnish an account of Dickens's early efforts in this direction, which show what an amount of anxieties and troubles beset him—a mere youth at the time—at this early stage, and with what cleverness and resolution he met them. He had not to struggle hard to gain the ear of the public, but had to contend with those who ought to have assisted him—hostile and grasping publishers—and yet he contrived, though somewhat entangled by their arts, to extricate himself from their toils. He was, in truth, a wonderful young fellow.

All know the almost pathetic account given by Boz of his emotions on seeing his first composition in print—how, on buying a copy of the magazine, he was too agitated to look at it, and had to turn aside and walk up and down to compose himself, his eyes being blinded with tears. To the careless and superficial this might seem strained and melodramatic, but it must be considered he was then a youth, not twenty-one—the incident occurred in 1833—and that he was struggling to exist, with his family almost wholly dependent on him. The Magazine in question was *The Old Monthly*, and it was published in Johnson's Court, one of the old byways in Fleet Street, by one A. Robertson. Boz told long afterwards, when recalling the proposal made to him to write "Pickwick," that he recognised in the person who opened the business to him, whose name was Hall, the very man who sold him the copy of the magazine in Johnson's Court. Though then evidently a shopman, we find Hall two years later a partner in Chapman and Hall's. Boz is positive and particular in the matter, so we need not doubt his accuracy. Yet it seems an odd and sudden transformation. But there are some trifling proofs that seem to support it; for only a few months later, early in 1834, we find that the name Robertson has disappeared and the magazine is transferred to "Cochrane and Macrone, 11, Waterloo Place," with Boz as contributor, so it may have been that Robertson's firm had been wound up. A few months later Macrone's name vanished, and the firm stood "James Cochrane and Co." Macrone had gone to set up for himself, and Boz had formed a connection with him. Though Boz recognised Hall when he came with the "Pickwick" proposals, it is clear that he had not met him at Chapman's, where Boz already had dealings. The matter is certainly a little "wrapt in mystery." But the fact of interest is that Boz's first publisher was A. Robertson, of Johnson's Court, Fleet Street.

This *Monthly* magazine was a highly respectable thing, and not badly edited. It was also "the British Register of Literature, Sciences, and the Belles-Lettres," though the two last might be included in the first. It was an old-established magazine, for Dickens's contribution appeared in Vol. XVI, which was in "a new series." It was called "A Dinner at Poplar Walk," a little later changed to "Mr. Minns and his Cousin," for some reason not very apparent. It is more a rattling farce than a story. Indeed, most of Boz's short tales at this period were really disguised farces.*

To turn for a moment to the *Sketches.* Macrone, then a young man like himself, gave Boz £150, with another £100 for the second series. This was really not so bad for a new and little-known journalist. The *Sketches* did well. A year later, when the first numbers of "Pickwick" were having a *succès fou,* Macrone wished to benefit by this popularity, and announced a new edition in monthly parts exactly like "Pickwick." Boz was dreadfully put out at this, as it gave the notion of his trying to foist on the public an old work, and he dispatched the faithful Forster to try to dissuade him. Macrone was immovable, and stood upon his rights. This matter, however, may stand over till we come to deal with Chapman and Hall. Sufficient to say that they freed him from Macrone, paying to him a sum amounting to £2,250. Boz had, of course, no money, so that he had to rely on his new friends.

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* His contributions are: (1) "A Dinner at Poplar Walk"; (2) "Mrs. Joseph Porter, 'Over the Way'"; (3) "Horatio Sparkins"; (4) "The Bloomsbury Christening," often selected for readings; (5 and 6) "The Boarding House," which filled two parts; (7) "The Steam Excursion"; (8 and 9) "Passage in the Life of Mr. Watkins Tottle," also in two parts. This comprised all his work for *The Monthly*, and prepared him for his *Sketches*. These stories are, and will always be read on account of their "local colour," for they present pictures of middle-class life and society at the period. For the same reason, Albert Smith's "Mr. Ledbury" is always welcome as a photograph of suburban manners and customs.

And we may wonder how this young fellow steered his course so well among all these rocks and pitfalls. Truly he was an extraordinary young man, unique and original in all his ways. As I have shown elsewhere, there were always the two Dickenses, the man of business and the writer. What young fellow do we know of, who, starting to write, eager to get an opening, ever found himself in the hands of no less than three publishers? And he but twenty-four.

The firm of Cochrane that took over *The Monthly* was originally, as mentioned above, "Cochrane and Macrone" of Waterloo Place. It was curious, that as Robertson had brought Boz into connection with Chapman's firm, so Cochrane, his second publisher, was to bring him into connection with his next publisher. Dickens was then a gay, bright young fellow, who really seems to have attracted all he met. He was pushful too, and knew how to avail himself of openings and opportunities. He knew well the Shakespearean maxim: "Let 's take the instant by the forward top." And so when he found Macrone at Cochrane's he naturally made him his friend, and when Macrone set up for himself, how natural that the latter should invite him to write for him! They were at one time living under the same roof at Furnival's. These were not exactly "first-class" publishers, but they were welcome to him at the time. But he was certainly unlucky in this publisher. It was no doubt with a certain exultation that he contracted with him to take the "Sketches by Boz," and issue them in a volume with illustrations. Here was his first book. But he did not dream what a struggle there was before him, when it became necessary to rescue it and put it into other hands. Macrone was probably of Italian origin, and his name shortened from Macirone. But this is mere speculation.

Macrone sold several editions of the *Sketches* on their first coming out. The outlay must have been considerable, owing to the plates, which are even now *recherchés* for their artistic merit. They were the work of the admirable George Cruikshank, then the one and only illustrator. And what an amazing power he had! To look merely at his pictures of "Oliver Twist" we see the story moving before us, the figures have such life and roundness. They recall the same effects exhibited by Meissonier. One might wonder how it was that when Chapman and Hall were casting about for a successor to the luckless Seymour they had not secured Cruikshank. I cannot but think that the very story of "Pickwick" would have developed extraordinary powers of humour in the artist, and made it less remote from actual life than it was in the hands of Phiz. Cruikshank probably was not free, and had been already secured by the enterprising Bentley for his intended magazine. We know that about the middle of the year 1836, when the title of the venture was being discussed and changed, he had been introduced to Boz, and had planned a new story from his pen to be illustrated by George. It would not do to have both ventures illustrated by the same artist.*

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* Mr. Robson has, or had, what perhaps may be considered the most wonderful *Pickwick* in existence. It has all the "points" complete, "addresses," advertisements, and with the plates in their different "states." But the main attraction is a single leaf of the original MS. of the story, in the author's clear, decided handwriting. Some thirty or so other leaves are in the United States, the rest are presumed to be lost or destroyed. This interesting and truly precious leaf alone was valued at £250, but is now incorporated with this unique copy of *Pickwick*, and catalogued at £450.

Mr. Robson, the intelligent art bookseller of Coventry Street, was lately offering a very remarkable collection of papers connected with the *Sketches:* they are, in fact, the transaction itself in its fullest extent. It was priced at 175 guineas. "The whole carefully inlaid or inserted in a folio volume, with description attached to each article, and bound in crushed levant morocco super-extra lettered on front cover, watered silk linings, gilt edges, by Broca." This account makes the bibliophile's mouth water. But the young fellow, could he have dreamed at the moment—nigh seventy years ago—that this trivial bargain of his would be so appreciated!

The collection comprises: An autograph letter of one page 4to, signed in full "Charles Dickens" and dated 1836: "My dear Macrone, I called here to say that I was with Cruikshank last night when we finally determined on eight illustrations for the first volume:" The receipt for £100 from Charles Dickens to John Macrone for the sale of the entire copyright of both series of "Sketches by Boz," dated 5th January, 1837, signed in full and wholly in the handwriting of Charles Dickens: The Memorandum of Agreement between Chapman and Hall and John Macrone for the re-purchase of both series of "Sketches by Boz," dated 17th June, 1837, in Macrone's autograph, setting forth the terms and manner of payment, on 2¼ pages 4to: John Macrone's receipt for £2,250, dated 24th June, 1837, for the purchase referred to in the above memorandum, with full assignment to Messrs. Chapman and Hall: The agreement between Charles Dickens and Messrs. Chapman and Hall, respecting the copyright of the first and second series of "Sketches by Boz," dated 31st March, 1840, engrossed on two sheets of parchment, with fine signatures and seals of C. Dickens, E. Chapman and W. Hall.

From these papers it is clear to me that the vilified Macrone was much more liberal to his writer than Forster makes out. Thus on 5th January, 1837, when just one half of "Pickwick" had appeared, we find Boz signing over to the publisher his whole copyright in both series for £100. This must have been in addition to the original price, as the book had long since been published. It looks as though Macrone had purchased with a view to his scheme for issuing the work with illustrations and in parts.

Dickens had a sort of indirect connexion with Colburn the publisher, who issued all the fashionable novels of the day. Colburn's wife was one of my best friends. It is not generally known that she married *en seconde noces* the sturdy John Forster, Boz's friend and adviser; and she brought him as her dowry much money, a number of valuable copyrights, and some valuable manuscripts, notably the whole correspondence of David Garrick.

Richard Bentley, of New Burlington Street, successor to Henry Colburn, was a remarkable man in his profession, notable always for the interesting and dramatic character of the books he issued, and for the distinguished writers that he enrolled. He had a strong character, was bold and even daring in his plans, and generally successful.

I see Richard Bentley now, as I saw him for the first time in his office at New Burlington Street. A short, pink-faced man, with great white whiskers and bristly, wiry hair; smart of speech, fluent and pleasant also, with a cordiality and *bonhomie* that some may have considered was affected. I at least have reason to speak of him with sincere gratitude, for his treatment of me was singularly generous and encouraging. I had written a two-volume story called "Mildrington, the Barrister," a first novel which had not been very successful. He read it, and was so satisfied with it that he not only took "the stock" off the publisher's hands and re-issued it himself, but made this very "sporting" proposal: "I tell you what," he said, "you go and write me a novel, and I will give you a hundred and fifty pounds for it." And so he did. "Bella Donna," I was gratified to find for his sake, was a success, passed rapidly into a second edition, and made a sort of name for the author, who called himself "Gilbert Dyce." That story again was read by Boz himself, and prompted him to engage me to write him a three-volume novel. Here was good fortune. That office or literary studio became afterwards a pleasant resort, and I often found my way thither during the three generations of the house of Bentley.

Before the success of "Pickwick" was assured, Bentley had "marked down" Boz, who was introduced to him by George Hogarth, Boz's father-in-law. So soon as he had secured his Boz, he conceived the idea of utilising him in many ways, notably by issuing a magazine of a very brilliant and unusual order, which should be illustrated by the best artist of the day, George Cruikshank, and directed by the young Dickens. He gave him £20 a month, increased later to £30. The magazine was quite a new departure, and was laid out on handsome lines. In those days it was no manufacture of sentences, at so much per "thousand words." Not then had been heard the odious stipulation, "You may write me an article of not more than two thousand words." I have before me now some five handsome and substantial volumes which contain all the numbers that were issued under Boz's directions, some twenty or so in all. Bound up with the text are all the wrappers, advertisements, addresses, which seem to impart a sort of living contemporary interest to the pages. There is even a local colour. It seems to bring before us the strenuous youth, only twenty-four, who was directing not only this venture but many other enterprises, and we see in all his various contributions evidence of his buoyant, intrepid nature and high spirits. The first number appeared on January 2nd, 1837, when the Editor was nearly halfway through his immortal "Pickwick." There had been some uncertainty as to the title. One had been settled on, and actually advertised, *The Wit's Miscellany.* I have seen the notice; but this may have been thought too pretentious, and it was determined to have one of a more neutral kind, namely *Bentley's*, which suggested a truly witty retort by Barham. The publisher had told him of the change: "Instead of *The Wit's Miscellany,* I have determined to call it *Bentley's.*" "Would not that be going to *the other extreme?*" was Barham's sly remark.

In his Prologue Boz seems to have felt the awkwardness of the change of title and the smart of the jest, for he quotes the old joke about Swift and the youth who "set up for a wit": "Then, sir, I advise you to sit down again." He urged that it could not apply to him. "The fact is absolutely undeniable that we originally advertised ourselves—or rather our work—as *The Wit's Miscellany,* thereby indicating beyond all doubt that we were Wits."

Boz, at that time in the best of health and spirits, shrank from no labour or burden. He had nearly a dozen numbers of "Pickwick" to write, the magazine to edit, papers to contribute, and one of his great stories, "Oliver Twist," to furnish for the opening number. In his first number the young Editor gathered quite a brilliant company round him. "Father Prout," Dr. Maginn, Theodore Hook, Samuel Lover, Gleig, Fenimore Cooper, Haynes Bailey, the authors of "Hadji Baba" and of "Headlong Hall." There were some oddities—as Father Prout appeared no less than three times in different parts of the magazine. The Editor supplied "The Public Life of Mr. Tulrumble," an account of a provincial mayor—evidently intended for one of the "Sketches by Boz." Voluntary contributions were considered, for a notice from the Editor tells us that "numerous contributions have been received. Some are under consideration: and to the authors of the remainder, communications have been addressed by the Editor, who begs to state that in future he cannot return rejected articles."

On June 1st the magazine contained the following highly personal notice: "Since the appearance of the last number of this work the Editor has to mourn the sudden death of a very dear young relative to whom he was most affectionately attached, and whose society had been for a long time the chief solace of his labours. He has been compelled to seek a short interval of rest and quiet. The next number will be conducted by him as usual, and the adventures of Oliver Twist will then be continued." And in the literary intelligence we read: "*Oliver Twist.* We beg to announce that the 'Adventures of the Parish Boy,' under the above title, will be continued in our next *Miscellany.* The melancholy domestic affliction which Mr. Dickens has just sustained prevented the possibility of any mental exertion for the present number." The publication of "Pickwick" had been suspended for two months owing to the same affliction, and thus two publishing offices thrown into confusion. What a genuinely feeling heart was his! This incident is really unprecedented.

All through his life Boz was very partial to the mode of address illustrated above, and loved to write a letter, as it were, to the public, and take them in his confidence. "Addresses," "Proclamations," "Personals," "Protests," were very constantly issued. I believe this practice was owing to his highly-strung, sensitive nature, which could not rest for a day or a week without expending itself in this fashion.

The second number was notable for a very pleasant *jeu d'esprit* in Boz's happiest style. It was a leaflet bound up with the number—a lively parody of the speech from the throne at the opening of Parliament. At the head was a charmingly engraved picture by Phiz, depicting the publisher bending under the load of bales of his magazine—an excellent likeness, too, as I can testify. Beside him was the brilliant young Editor, leading him on by his coat collar; while an animated crowd surrounds them, busy scrambling for the scattered numbers. The figure of the Editor also is an excellent likeness, well-made, graceful and interesting. Here, again, we have yet another instance of the Editor's thought for his friends, for Phiz was still working with him on "Pickwick"; while Cruikshank, as the publisher's bondman, might have expected the job. The piece is in parts witty enough, particularly the ingenious note at the close: "His mightiness incorporated with his speech on general topics some especial references to one 'Oliver Twist.' Not distinctly understanding the allusion we have abstained from giving it."

In the third number we find a contributor, George Hogarth, introduced, who was Boz's father-in-law. His subject was a passage in the life of Beaumarchais. In Scott's entanglement with the Ballantynes and his publishers he obtained great assistance from a shrewd young Writer to the Signet, in fact from this very George Hogarth. Scott mentions him with great praise for his assistance.

Boz's contributions to the first volume were numerous: "The Public Life of Mr. Tulrumble," "Theatrical Advertisement Extraordinary," "The Pantomime of Life," "Some Particulars Concerning a Lion," and five portions of "Oliver Twist."

"Oliver Twist" was, however, destined to be a second time interrupted, but for less tragical reasons, viz. in September, 1837. In the number of October 1st, 1837, there was no "Oliver Twist," and a rather odd apology accounted for its absence: "Notice. *Oliver Twist* will be continued by Mr. Dickens in the next number of the *Miscellany*, and after that time from month to month as usual. The great length of the proceedings of the Mudfog Association prevents the insertion of the usual continuation this month." This seems extraordinary. To suspend an exciting story, which everyone was reading, to introduce an ephemeral paper, was surely "bad business" and risky. They might think that it was to be broken off altogether. These interruptions might have done serious damage.

We find in Part II an illustration to Ingoldsby's tale of "The Spectre of Tappington," representing the skeleton's appearance, and on a boot-jack the name of the artist, "W. Buss." This was our old friend who is so interesting to Pickwickians as the author of the two discarded "Buss plates." As is known, he was dismissed rather summarily, as a failure. But I fancy we can see here a trait of Boz's good nature, who wished to make a little *amende*. But the picture is a wretched one, and no more of his work appears. Poor Buss! One feels a sympathy for him.

In the third number appeared an impromptu that is often quoted, and has merit:—

> "Who the Dickens Boz could be
> Puzzled many a learned elf,
> Till time unveiled the mystery
> And Boz appeared as Dickens's self."
>
> C. J. Davies.

In the March number, 1838, appeared a humorous proclamation, as from a royal personage, announcing the present appearance of "Nickleby," to be published not by Bentley, but by Chapman and Hall, who had just issued the completed "Pickwick" in volume form. It was to appear on March 30th; so this wonderful young man must have had on his hands and in his brain at the same time all these works, namely the conclusion of "Pickwick" and "Oliver Twist," "Grimaldi," "Nickleby," the revised "Sketches by Boz," and the magazine editing, with occasional papers, all of which seemed to appeal to the public too much and too often.

After finding him thus burdened and his future so heavily mortgaged, we are almost startled to find among the advertisements of the magazine an announcement of yet further work! We read as actually being "in the press": "New work by Boz in three volumes, post octavo: *A new work of fiction by Charles Dickens, Esq.* (*Boz*), author of the *Pickwick Papers*, etc." Now not a line of this book could have been written, and yet it was announced as complete and as being printed. In the second number of the *Miscellany*, however, is the announcement: "*New work by Boz.* In three volumes post octavo, *a new work of fiction.*" And by this time "Oliver Twist" had commenced. But in the fourth number we reach a positive statement in this important notice: "*New work by Boz* in three volumes post octavo. *Barnaby Rudge,* A story of the riots of 1780, *by Charles Dickens, Esq., Boz.*"

Three stories going on together! And it is clear that he really intended completing this new venture offhand. But it is equally clear that so shrewd a publisher as Bentley would not dream of having four works by Boz before the public at the same moment. As the sequel proved, this announcement was intended to secure the energetic author to himself beyond the possibility of retreat. It was also a "warning off" to other publishers, thus showing how deeply Boz was engaged to him. Could it be that Boz had already written a large portion of "Barnaby Rudge," it thus being, as it were, "in the press," feeling that he could easily complete it, and had laid it aside? I doubt if he would have consented to publishing such a fiction as that it *was* "in the press" when it was not. He was too honest for that. But on the end cover of the number for November, 1838, Bentley was able to display a large notice, filling the whole page, and printed in thick black letters:—

THE READERS OF
BENTLEY'S MISCELLANY
ARE INFORMED THAT IMMEDIATELY
ON THE COMPLETION OF
"OLIVER TWIST,"
MR. CHARLES DICKENS (BOZ),
WILL COMMENCE A NEW STORY, TO BE ENTITLED
"BARNABY RUDGE,"
IN THIS PUBLICATION.

The story of Chapman and Hall's grand *coup*—their engagement of Dickens to supply a descriptive commentary for a number of humorous or caricature sketches by Seymour—has been told and retold. All know how this venture turned into the immortal "Pickwick." It was flattering for the young man that he had not to go round knocking at publishers' doors, and begging for a hearing, as was to be Thackeray's fate with "Vanity Fair." Everyone came to *him*, not he to them. This was a note of character.

We may always wonder how Chapman and Hall allowed their brilliant writer to slip from their hands, even temporarily, into those of Bentley. The fact was that they were not then wholly confident in the success of "Pickwick," while Bentley, who had great sagacity in such matters, was already able to forecast his fame, and secured him without opposition from them. But so soon as Boz had begun to quarrel with Bentley, they had become conscious of their mistake, and were eager to draw him back, and they certainly intervened in a very generous and sporting way. For we find them coming forward with over £2,000 to rescue him from this crushing, overwhelming burden of the unwritten "Barnaby Rudge." By this advance, following on the assistance they had given him in the matter of the *Sketches*, Boz became their debtor and mortgaged to them, as it were.

Not until March 31st, 1840, was a formal agreement drawn up between Dickens and his new publishers, by which, as Mr. Robson tells us, the respective shares in the copyright of the *Sketches* already referred to was settled. This is engrossed on two sheets of parchment, "with fine signatures and seals of Edward Chapman and W. Hall."

Chapman and Hall! For all literary folk those names have a sort of melodious sound. We think of them with interest because so inseparable from "Boz." "Pickwick" does not look the same with other names on the title-page. We like to see them just below the image of Mr. Pickwick, seated in his punt; we even like the names of their provincial agents—"Edinburgh: John Menzies"; "Dublin: James Maglashan." It was the fitting thing that all through, off and on perhaps, his and their fortunes should be bound up together. Chapman and Hall without "Boz" would not be as they are; "Boz" without Chapman and Hall would not, perhaps, be as he is now. With them he began; with them ended. He is gone; they are left.

Publishers may well envy the unique distinction which associated Chapman and Hall with "Pickwick"—the publishers of "Pickwick" now (1913) and then (1836–7). It was a wonderful chance that led them to Furnival's Inn—now levelled. By their simple undertaking they really created a perfect literature—a vast library—a stream of commentary that has gone on tumbling its way along in a torrent from that day to this. I knew Chapman about 1858. I doubt if there be half-a-dozen now alive who recall "Little Hall." I also knew very well Frederic Chapman, who joined the firm in 1841, and became later head of it. An excellent fellow he was, somewhat blunt and bluff, but straightforward and good-natured. On his shoulders, even when Edward Chapman was alive, lay the burden. He was a tall, burly, rubicund man, and had good business instinct. He had a small but delightful house in Ovington Square, to which someone had added a billiard-room, which he turned into a charming dining-room. What tasty Lucullus-like dinners were given there! I cannot say how he managed the firm, but when Dickens was alive he tried to meet his wishes in every conceivable way. Forster, too, he looked up to almost reverentially. The firm was made into a limited company in 1880. F. Chapman died in 1895. The managing director of the firm to-day is Mr. Arthur Waugh, the critic and biographer, who is carrying on the traditions of bygone days, with Dickens as the firm's basis of prosperity.

In March, 1847, died William Hall, and Boz and Forster attended his funeral at Highgate. In one of his letters Boz speaks tenderly of the loss of "poor Hall." As we have seen, there was a curious connection between Boz and this worthy man.

I recall my first visit to the firm in Piccadilly. John Forster was with me, who strode in, all important, "as though the whole place belonged to him." I was struck with the general stately look, the bustle, the number of clerks hurrying about. Forster was received with infinite respect, for he dictated all things. The partners were sent for, and I saw and was introduced to Hall, I think. Young Frederic, as he was then, was waiting on the great Forster.

Dickens's renewed connection with Chapman and Hall was to be at first inauspicious enough. Their joint venture of "Martin Chuzzlewit" proved comparatively unsuccessful, its circulation falling one-half, and the publishers grew alarmed. They were to have been repaid their advances in the Bentley transaction out of the profits, but these falling short, they spoke of appropriating £50 a month out of the author's regular allowance. This was in June, 1843, and he was so offended that he began to think of making proposals to another firm. "Mr. Hall should have a piece of my mind," he wrote. Bradbury and Evans were then his printers, and they received his offer with some surprise; but they were not very confident in their prospect, which was, indeed, to start as publishers for the first time. But owing to Forster's sagacious advice Boz patched up his quarrel with his publishers, on the grounds that they were about to publish for him, on commission, "A Christmas Carol," and the quarrel would not be exactly a stimulant to their exertions. Unfortunately, as it turned out, when the latter book appeared to be enjoying enormous success, and he was expecting a clear £1,000 profit, he only received, in February, one-half. This disappointment, with "terrific unpaid bills," reduced him to misery and despair, and it determined him to finally break with them. This slight but elegant little trifle seems to have cost an enormous sum, namely, over £1,500, to produce. It is easy to see that they were scared by symptoms of failing popularity, by the prophecy in one of the reviews that "having gone up like a rocket he would come down like the stick," etc. They were naturally alarmed as to the monies lent—"invested in him"—which was part of the price for his labour. On his side Boz had rashly embarked some thousands in his longing to get free of what was galling him. Thus had he bound himself in two serious obligations. Later, when he broke with Bradbury and Evans, it cost him the useless purchase of *Household Words*, which he destroyed so soon as it was purchased. These are costly taxes on the indulgence of one's feelings. But Boz could not rest under any menace of trouble. He must mend or end it on the spot and on the moment at whatever cost. It turned out after all later that the profits of the "Carol" had not come in at the time, and that they reached very nearly the amount he had expected. Notwithstanding, he and Chapman and Hall parted company. But he soon returned to them again, and remained with them to the end ; and shortly after his death, in 1870, the firm bought the copyright of all his books. Their names now seem part and parcel of Dickens, and in spite of the many reprints of each book as it falls out of copyright, the public seem to prefer those editions of his old firm, as recent recorded sales indicate. It would take too much space even to enumerate the various editions of his complete works published by the firm ; but there is scarcely a year passes that does not see some new venture on their part, and it speaks well of their enterprise that recently they have issued the most sumptuous edition yet published, and also the cheapest edition one could desire.

"Bradbury and Evans" seems to us more of an abstraction than the others. This may be owing to the admixture of the printing element. After the "Christmas Carol" disturbance Boz fled to their arms, and they received him with joy. But the new firm little dreamed what summary treatment was awaiting them some years later. It was on June 1st, 1844, that Bradbury and Evans signed a contract with him to advance him £2,800, in return for which they were to have a fourth share in whatever he might write during the next eight years. This advance was no doubt to go to pay off his late publishers. Thus, as Chapman and Hall had "bought him out" from Bentley, so Bradbury and Evans were to buy him out from Chapman.

Like Scott, Dickens in ordinary course might have confined himself to a single firm of printers ; but, as it turned out, he had three : this firm of Bradbury ; Bentley (a connection of the publishers), for "Oliver

Twist" and "Grimaldi"; and later Whitings. Hicks was the foreman who superintended "Pickwick" through the press, and the worthy Birtles, whom I knew so well, looked after *All the Year Round* at Whitings.

The connection continued for some years until the tremendous explosion arising out of Dickens's proclamation, the famous "Personal," occurred, which was followed by quarrel and the law suits. Then came a complete rupture, when he broke off all connection with them.

Being now without a publisher, he determined to return to the Chapmans. This firm was infinitely more suited to him. They were more flexible, more literary in their *entourage*, and they were always inclined to further his wishes. The great success of his later books must have caused them some twinges. They have now enjoyed the fruits of the renewed connection for nearly fifty years. The tale of the astounding number of copies and editions of his books has often been told. I am certain Boz felt infinitely more "comfortable" with them. "Bleak House," "Dombey" and "Copperfield" were the chief works associated with the house of Bradbury, Evans and Co.

We know of two instances, at least, where Boz became a little speculative, and seemed to be his own publisher. The "Pictures from Italy," issued in 1846, is described as being "published *for the author* by Bradbury, Evans and Co." The "Tale of Two Cities," though issued by a regular publisher, was also to be ordered at the *All the Year Round* Office, Wellington Street.* "Hard Times" too was his own venture.

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* Book collectors are familiar enough with the different editions of *Oliver Twist* in one, two or three volumes, all with the Cruikshank plates, but it is little known that in 1846 it was issued "in monthly parts, revised carefully by the author throughout," and (uniform with the *Pickwick Papers*). By that time, however, the plates must have been pretty much worn. The writer has a copy of *Oliver* which may be the envy of bibliophilists. It consists of the parts in the *Miscellany*, bound up with all the fine type and the early impressions of the plates.

It may have been that Boz had once a convict publisher—certainly a publisher among convicts—as in the instance of a very far off and unexpected issuing of his "Pickwick Papers" in Van Dieman's Land, of all places in the world. He talks somewhere of "Botany Bay assurance," but this was a wonderful effort and worthy of all admiration; for to bring out a work of fiction in a penal colony was indeed something heroic. The book is now open before me, and is, we may well imagine, a scarce thing and a great curio. It is really very respectably done, somewhat rough and crude in execution, but still passable enough. A copy from England may have come out in one of the gruesome convict ships. On the title-page we read that it was "illustrated *after* Phiz," and that it was published in

V. D. Land
Henry Dowling, Launceston
1838

Dowling says he was not only publisher but also printer of the book. At first it looked as though he got out sets of sheets from London, but the type has a sort of *exotic* aspect. In a very modest, not to say humble, address Dowling asks indulgence for his bantling:—

"It is confidently believed that the present reprint of the *Pickwick Papers* is the largest publication which has issued from either the New South Wales or the Tasmanian Press. It is hoped that not only is it the largest, but that it will be pronounced by the public to be the best executed typographical work that has been published in these Colonies. The publisher can assure his subscribers that no trouble or expense has been spared to secure it such a distinction. The trouble and expense have, indeed, been considerable—greater than was originally contemplated ; but it was thought that if any publication would repay the cost of its production it would be the far-famed *Pickwick Papers.*

"The original work was produced, as the colonial public are aware, in monthly parts. Its popularity was so unprecedently great that 30,000 copies of each number were regularly sold off. No writer, perhaps, ever enjoyed a popularity so great as that obtained by Mr. Dickens for his *Pickwick Papers.* Every class of periodical, from the aristocratic *Quarterly Review* to the penny newspaper, joined in spontaneous applause of the work. It is impossible for the gravest person to read its pages and resist the varied humour in which they abound.

"It remains for the Tasmanian publisher to add that in order to render his work at once acceptable to subscribers and creditable to the colony he has been at the expense of procuring a series of illustrations to his reprint, after the most humorous of the original designs which accompanied the English publication, by 'Phiz.' These illustrations will be found fully equal to the original, and as the work of a colonial artist, will preserve to the *reprint* its character of a purely colonial publication."

Dowling clearly is not a little proud of his work and complacently satisfied with the credit that it must bring to his colony. No doubt the type was set by convict printers. It will be seen that he had to issue it by subscription, so as to be secured, in some degree, against loss. I have little doubt, however, that poor Dowling *did* lose by his venture. Some six hundred closely printed octavo pages was a risky thing. The illustrations are indifferent enough—the unindulgent would call them shocking—by no means equal to "Phiz," as claimed, and of a "scratchy" sort. They are signed by "Tiz"—a mild colonial jest—and are tolerably faithfully copied.

Publishers in the United States were not slack in coining money out of the work of the young English writer. "Pickwick," above all, was their prey, and on no book did the piratical horde settle with such avidity. They all competed with each other, as well they might, for there was nothing to pay. I believe Dickens deeply resented and never forgave this treatment, for it inflamed him to indignation to see the large sums the Americans were paying to read him, in which he could have no share. This was the true reason for his visit to the States, an inspiration half formed to try and reshape the copyright law. Nothing less attractive than these American issues can be conceived. As the object was to undersell each other, everything that could be saved was spared—the paper was inferior and ill-coloured, the print poor, the whole offering a singularly mean look. But cheap they were: some were in double columns; others, less objectionable, in a small pocket size, to match the "Waverley Novels." In this shape "Pickwick" filled five volumes. The names of these pirates were Turney, Peterson and Lea. There were fair and excellent people—some, like Ticknor and Fields, were true friends—but we can say none treated him with a handsome liberality. This is, I have no doubt, what inflamed the bitter dislike to the Americans that is exhibited in "Martin Chuzzlewit." The Harpers' honorarium of £1,000 for a magazine paper was showy enough and a bit of good advertisement. In this connection there was a little episode which few know of, and which involved him in a dispute with some Philadelphia publishers, Patterson & Co. In rather heated language he had accused his Americans of sending him the poorest remuneration. These people took up the challenge, and certainly furnished a list of payments from all sorts and conditions of publishers of rather respectable amount. The paper will be found at the end of a curious life of Boz, issued in the States, and the work of an American doctor. It may be added that other exotic editions were issued at Calcutta.

VI

APPENDIX

Appendix

APPENDIX A

STATEMENT OF MESSRS. BRADBURY AND EVANS IN THE "PERSONAL" DISPUTE

"MR. CHARLES DICKENS AND HIS LATE PUBLISHERS

"MESSRS. Bradbury and Evans are permitted to avail themselves of the present opportunity to explain the cessation of their connection with *Household Words*, by which they are at liberty to take part in the establishment of *Once a Week*. Their explanation only concerns themselves, and that only in reference to the close of their relations with Mr. Charles Dickens, as Editor or Conductor of the former work. Although the circumstances have been freely canvassed in various publications, Bradbury and Evans have themselves hitherto made no public statement on the subject; but they now feel that the time has come to break the silence they have maintained, and thus to protect themselves from further misconstruction.

"Their connection with *Household Words* ceased *against their will*, under circumstances of which the following are material:

"So far back as 1836 Bradbury and Evans had business relations with Mr. Dickens, and in 1844 an agreement was entered into by which they acquired an interest in all the works he might write, or in any periodical he might originate during a term of seven years. Under this agreement Bradbury and Evans became possessed of a joint, though unequal interest with Mr. Dickens in *Household Words*, commenced in 1850. Friendly relations had simultaneously sprung up between them, and they were on terms of close intimacy in 1858, when circumstances led to Mr. Dickens's publication of a statement on the subject of his conjugal differences in various newspapers, including *Household Words* of June the 12th.

"The public disclosure of these differences took most persons by surprise, and was notoriously the subject of comments, by no means complimentary to Mr. Dickens himself, as regarded the taste of this proceeding. On the 17th of June, however, Bradbury and Evans learnt from a common friend that Mr. Dickens had resolved to break off his connection with them because this statement was not printed in the number of *Punch* published the day preceding—in other words, because it did not occur to Bradbury and Evans to exceed their legitimate functions as Proprietors and Publishers, and to require the insertion of statements on a domestic and painful subject in the inappropriate columns of a comic miscellany. No previous request for the insertion of this statement had been made either to Bradbury and Evans, or to the Editor of *Punch*, and the grievance of Mr. Dickens substantially amounted to this, that Bradbury and Evans did not take upon themselves, unsolicited, to gratify an eccentric wish by a preposterous action.

"Mr. Dickens, with ample time for reflection, persisted in the attitude he had taken up, and in the following November summoned a meeting of the

Proprietors of *Household Words*. He did not himself attend this meeting; but a literary friend of Mr. Dickens came to it as his representative, and announced there officially that Mr. Dickens, in consequence of the non-appearance in *Punch* of his statement, considered that Bradbury and Evans had shown such disrespect and want of good faith towards him as to determine him, in so far as he had the power, to disconnect himself from them in business transactions; and the friend above mentioned, on the part of Mr. Dickens, accordingly moved a resolution dissolving the partnership, and discontinuing the work on May 28th. Bradbury and Evans replied that they did not, and could not believe that this was the sole cause of Mr. Dickens' altered feeling towards them; but they were assured that it *was* the sole cause, and that Mr. Dickens desired to bear testimony to their integrity and zeal as his publishers, but that his resolution was formed, and nothing would alter it. Bradbury and Evans repeatedly pressed Mr. Dickens's friend upon this point, but with no other result.

"Thus, on this ground alone, Mr. Dickens put an end to personal and business relations of long standing, and by an unauthorised and premature public announcement of the cessation of *Household Words* he forced Bradbury and Evans to an unwilling recourse to the Court of Chancery to restrain him from such proceedings thereby injuring the valuable property, in which others besides himself were interested. In fact, by his mode proceeding, he inflicted as much injury as his opportunities permitted. Not having succeeded in purchasing the share of his partners at his own price, he depreciated the value of this share by all the agencies at his command. By publicly announcing (so far as the Court of Chancery permitted) his intention to discontinue the publication of *Household Words;* by advertising a second work of a similar class under his management, by producing it, and by making it as close an imitation as was legally safe of *Household Words*, while that publication was actually still issuing, and still conducted by him, he took a course calculated to reduce the circulation and impair the prospects of a common property; and if he inflicted this injury on his partners, it is no compensation to them that he simultaneously sacrificed his own interests in the publication he is about to suppress.

"*Household Words* having been sold on the 16th inst. under a decree in Chancery, Bradbury and Evans have no further interest in its continuance, and are now free to make this personal statement, and to associate themselves in the establishment of *Once a Week*.

"*May*, 1859."

APPENDIX B

DICKENS'S OWN CONTRIBUTIONS TO HIS TWO JOURNALS

It seems an extraordinary thing that during a long series of years nobody showed any curiosity to learn what papers in the two journals were of his composition. He himself had selected a few of what he thought best worthy of preservation and as having merit, and which filled a small volume. But they were not a tithe of the whole. But the selection shows how excellent was his judgment, and how nice his taste. For the rest do not compare in merit with this choice. They are both ephemeral and inferior, and the collections made recently prove this. *Réchauffés* of this kind, even from the best hands, do not always answer. That painstaking commentator, the late Mr. Kitton, went through the *Household Words* with the author's son—groping, as it were—and made out a conjectural list. But all the time there was actually lying among Wills's papers the old office book containing the titles, also the name of each writer. This record is now in Mr. Lehmann's possession.

As to the contributions in the *All The Year Round*, Mr. Kitton, however, was more fortunate in meeting with Mr. W. H. Howe, who possessed the office book of that journal, though by an unlucky chance the volume has disappeared. A full list has been furnished by Mr. Kitton, and it is fortunate that we have it, for it supplies most striking evidence as to the energy and industry of the untiring Boz.

"*HOUSEHOLD WORDS.*"

Serial Contributions.

1851.—Jan. 25 to Dec. 10: A Child's History of England.

1854.—April 1 to Aug. 12: Hard Times: For these Times.

Occasional Papers.

1850.—March 30: A Preliminary Word, pp. 1–2; The Amusements of the People (First Paper), pp. 13–15. April 6, A Child's Dream of a Star, pp. 25–26; Perfect Felicity in a Bird's-Eye View, pp. 36–38. April 13: The Household Narrative, p 49; The Amusements of the People (Second Paper), pp. 57–60. May 11: From the Raven in the Happy Family (First Paper), pp. 156–158. May 18: The Begging-Letter Writer, pp. 169–172. May 25: A Walk in the Workhouse, pp. 204–207. June 8: From the Raven in the Happy Family (Second Paper), pp. 241–242. June 15: Old Lamps for New Ones, pp. 265–267. June 22: The Sunday Screw, pp. 289–292. July 20: The Ghost of Art, pp. 385–387. July 27: A Detective Police Party (First Paper), pp. 409–414. Aug. 10: A Detective Police Party (Second Paper), pp. 457–460. Aug. 24: From the Raven in the Happy Family (Third Paper), pp. 505–507. Sept. 14: Three "Detective" Anecdotes, pp. 577–580. Oct. 19: A Poor Man's Tale of a Patent, pp. 73–75. Oct. 26: Lively Turtle, pp. 97–99. Dec. 14: A December Vision, pp. 265–267.

1851.—Feb. 22: "Births.—Mrs. Meek, of a Son," pp. 505–507. March 8: A Monument of French Folly, pp. 553–558. March 22: Bill-Sticking, pp. 160–606. May 10: The Guild of Literature and Art, pp. 145–147. June 14: On duty with Inspector Field, pp. 265–270. June 28: A Few Conventionalities, pp. 313–315. Aug. 2: Our Watering-Place, pp. 433–436. Aug. 23: Whole Hogs, pp. 505–507. Aug. 30: A Flight, pp. 529–533. Oct. 11: Our School, pp. 49–52.

1852.—July 31: Our Honourable Friend, pp. 453–455. Aug. 28: Our Vestry, pp. 548–552. Oct. 9: Our Bore, pp. 73–76. Oct. 30: Lying Awake, pp. 145–148. Nov. 27: Trading in Death, pp. 241–245.

1853.—Feb. 5: Down with the Tide, pp. 481–485. June 11: The Noble Savage, pp. 337–339. Oct. 1: Frauds on the Fairies, pp. 97–100. Dec. 31: The Long Voyage, pp. 409–412.

1854.—March 25: The late Mr. Justice Talfourd, pp. 117–118. Nov. 4: Our French Watering-Place, pp. 265–270.

1855.—Feb. 3: That Other Public, pp. 1–4. Feb. 17: Prince Bull: a Fairy Tale, pp. 49–51. April 21: The Thousand and One Humbugs (First Paper), pp. 265–267. April 28: The Thousand and One Humbugs (Second Paper), pp. 289–292. May 5: The Thousand and One Humbugs (Third Paper), pp. 313–316. June 16: By Rail to Parnassus, pp. 477–480. June 23: Smuggled Relations, pp. 481–483. Aug. 4: The Great Baby, pp. 1–4. Aug. 11: Our Commission, pp. 25–27. Aug. 25: The Worthy Magistrate, p. 73. Sept. 29: Out of Town, pp. 193–196.

1856.—Jan. 26: A Nightly Scene in London, pp. 25–27. Feb. 2: The Friend of the Lions, pp. 61–63. May 3: Proposals for a National Jest-Book, pp. 361–364. June 14: The Demeanour of Murderers, pp. 505–507. June 28: Out of the Season, pp. 553–556.

1857.—Aug. 1: Curious Misprint in the *Edinburgh Review*, pp. 97–100.

1858.—June 12: Personal, p. 601.

1859.—Feb. 5: Douglas Jerrold, pp. 217–222. May 28: All the Year Round (an Address), p. 601; A Last Household Word, p. 620.

The following were written in collaboration with other writers:—

Serial Contributions.

1857.—Oct. 3 to 31: The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices (with Wilkie Collins).

Occasional Papers.

1850.—March 30: Valentine's Day at the Post-Office (with W. H. Wills). April 27: Pet Prisoners. May 4: The Heart of Mid-London (with W. H. Wills). June 1: A Popular Delusion (with W. H. Wills). July 6: The Old Lady in Threadneedle Street (with W. H. Wills). Sept. 7 and 21: Two Chapters on Bank-Note Forgeries (with W. H. Wills, part of second Chapter by Dickens). Sept. 21: Foreigners' Portraits of Englishmen. Nov. 16: *Household Words* and English Wills.

1851.—Feb. 1: Plate Glass (with W. H. Wills). April 5: Spitalfields (with W. H. Wills). April 26: The Metropolitan Protectives (with W. H. Wills). June 7: Epsom (with W. H. Wills). Sept. 6: One Man in a Dockyard (with R. H. Horne). Dec. 6: My Uncle (with W. H. Wills).

1852.—Jan. 17: A Curious Dance round a Curious Tree (with W. H. Wills). March 20: Post-Office Money Orders (with W. H. Wills). April 24: A Plated Article (with W. H. Wills).

1853.—March 19: Received, A Blank Cheque (with W. H. Wills). June 4: Idiots (with W. H. Wills).

1854.—Jan. 21: Fire and Snow.

1855.—Feb. 10: Gaslight Fairies.

"*ALL THE YEAR ROUND.*"

Serial Stories.

1859.—April 30 to Nov. 26: A Tale of Two Cities.

1860.—Aug. 4 to 11: Hunted Down; a story in Two Portions.

1860–61.—Dec. 1, 1860, to Aug. 3, 1861: Great Expectations.

1868.—Jan. 25, Feb. 8, March 14, April 4: Holiday Romance; in Four Parts. Feb. 1, 15, 29: George Silverman's Explanation.

Occasional Papers.

1859.—April 30: The Poor Man and His Beer, pp. 13–16. Sept. 24: Five New Points of Criminal Law, p. 517. Dec. 24: Leigh Hunt: A Remonstrance, pp. 206–208. Dec. 31: The Tattlesnivel Bleater, pp. 226–229.

1860.—Jan. 28, The Uncommercial Traveller (First Series): (1) His General Line of Business: The Shipwreck, pp. 321–326; Feb. 18, (2) Wapping Workhouse, pp. 392–396; Feb. 25, (3) Two Views of a Cheap Theatre, pp. 416–421; March 10, (4) Poor Mercantile Jack, pp. 462–466; March 24, (5) Refreshments for Travellers, pp. 512–516; April 7, (6) Travelling Abroad, pp. 557–562; April 21, (7) The Great Tasmania's Cargo, pp. 37–40; May 5, (8) City of London Churches, p. 85–89; May 26, (9) Shy Neighbourhoods, pp. 155–159;

June 16, (10) Tramps, pp. 230–234; June 30, (11) Dullborough Town, pp. 274–278; July 21, (12) Night Walks, pp. 348–352; Aug. 18, (13) Chambers, pp. 452–456; Sept. 8, (14) Nurses' Stories, pp. 517–521; Sept. 29, (15) Arcadian London, pp. 588–591; Oct. 13, (16) The Italian Prisoner, pp. 13–17.

1862.—March 1: The Young Man from the Country, pp. 540–542. March 8: An Enlightened Clergyman, p. 558.

1863.—March 21: Rather a Strong Dose, pp. 84–87. April 4: The Martyr Medium, pp. 133–136. May 2, The Uncommercial Traveller (Second Series): (1) The Calais Night Mail, pp. 229–233; May 16, (2) Some Recollections of Mortality, pp. 276–280; June 6, (3) Birthday Celebrations, pp. 348–352; June 20, (4) The Short-Timers, pp. 397–401; July 4, (5) Bound for the Great Salt Lake, pp. 444–449; July 18, (6) The City of the Absent, pp. 493–496; Aug. 1, (7) An old Stage-Coaching House, pp. 540–543; Aug. 15, (8) The Boiled Beef of New England, pp. 588–591; Aug. 29, (9) Chatham Dockyard, pp. 12–16; Sept. 12, (10) In the French-Flemish Country, pp. 61–65; Sept. 26, (11) Medicine Men of Civilisation, pp. 108–111; Oct. 24, (12) Titbull's Almshouses, pp. 205–210. Dec. 26: Note (signed), p. 419.

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